

SURVEY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES **=====CENTRAL FAIRFIELD=====**

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
C I T Y O F F A I R F I E L D

CHARLES HALL PAGE & ASSOCIATES, INC.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The City of Fairfield, Solano County, California, has appropriated Community Development Block Grant funds for development of a Downtown Improvement Program. For fiscal year 1981-82, approximately \$55,000 is to be used for street furniture, landscaping and planning projects. In subsequent years the City may choose to appropriate additional CDBG funds for other projects in the downtown area.

This report presents the findings of a survey of cultural resources located within and adjacent to the proposed downtown redevelopment project area in Fairfield. Although there are no definitive project boundaries at this time, the area of potential impact is not to exceed that shown on the map entitled "Cultural Resources Survey Area -- Central Fairfield." The original historic grid of Fairfield lies entirely within the proposed project area, as do annexations of the immediate post-war period (to the north and east) and more recent annexations (to the south and west). The boundaries on the map constitute the extent of the field work associated with this survey.

This report has been prepared in compliance with Section 800.4 (a) of Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (800 CFR 36), which requires that any project utilizing federal funding and/or licensing first must be reviewed in terms of the National Register eligibility of resources likely to be affected by such project. The findings presented herein are intended to provide the State of California Office of Historic Preservation with sufficient information with which to make determinations of National Register eligibility of certain properties within the City of Fairfield's proposed downtown redevelopment project area.

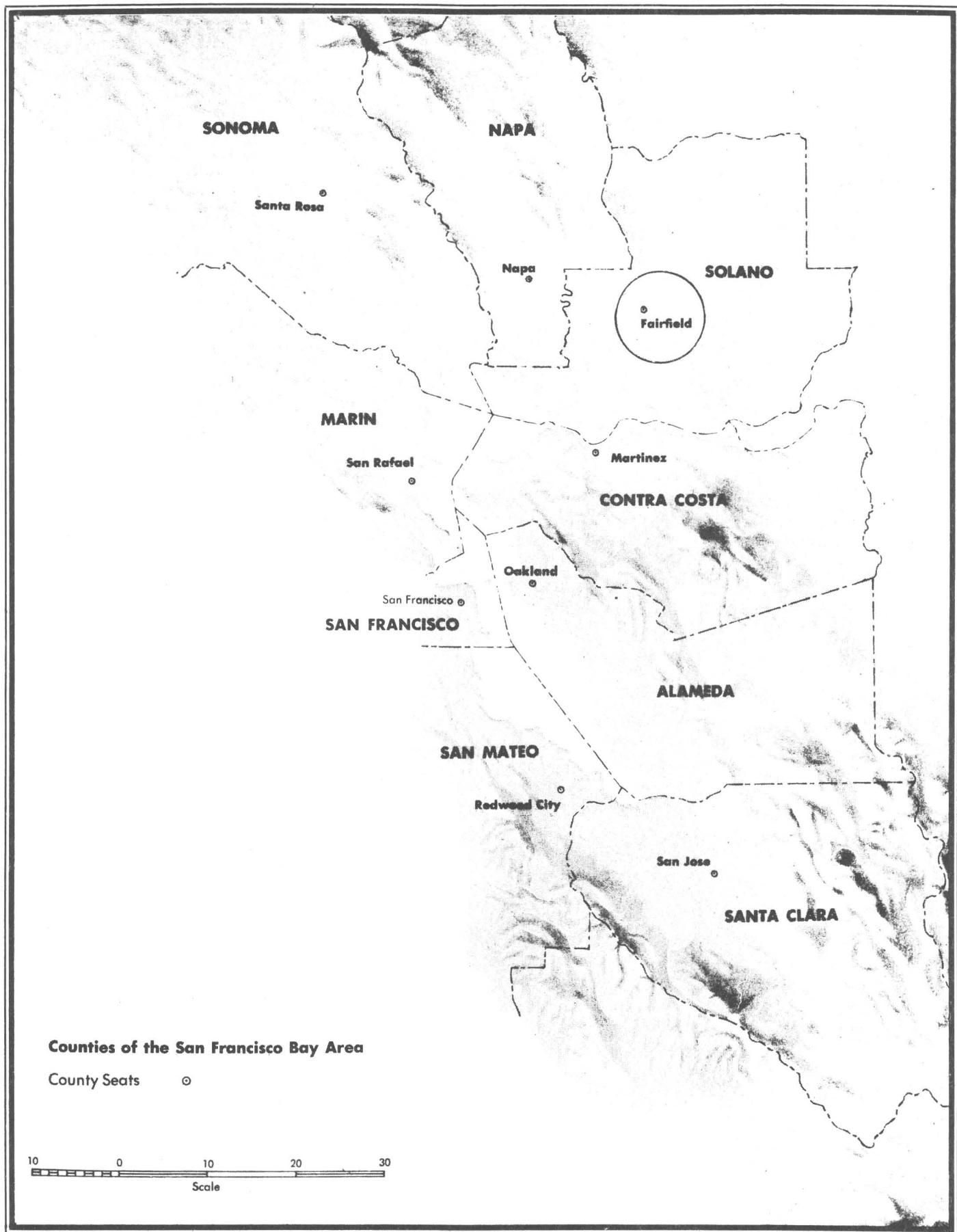
The preparation of this report was aided considerably by two previous publications: The Way It Was -- A Program for Historic Preservation, prepared by the Department of Environmental Affairs of the City of Fairfield in 1975; and Our Lasting Heritage -- An Historic and Archeological Preservation Plan for Central Solano County, prepared by the Central Solano County Cultural Heritage Commission in 1977. Our Lasting Heritage, in particular, contains an excellent history of Central Solano County, written by Peter Kaplan, and "A Survey of Buildings & Features," prepared by Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc. These were invaluable in grasping the historical and architectural context of Central Fairfield.

The bulk of the research was conducted in a careful reading of the Minutes of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, and of The Solano Republican, (the Suisun City, and later, Fairfield, newspaper which became The Daily Republican). The Supervisors' Minutes provide precise information on County buildings, and in

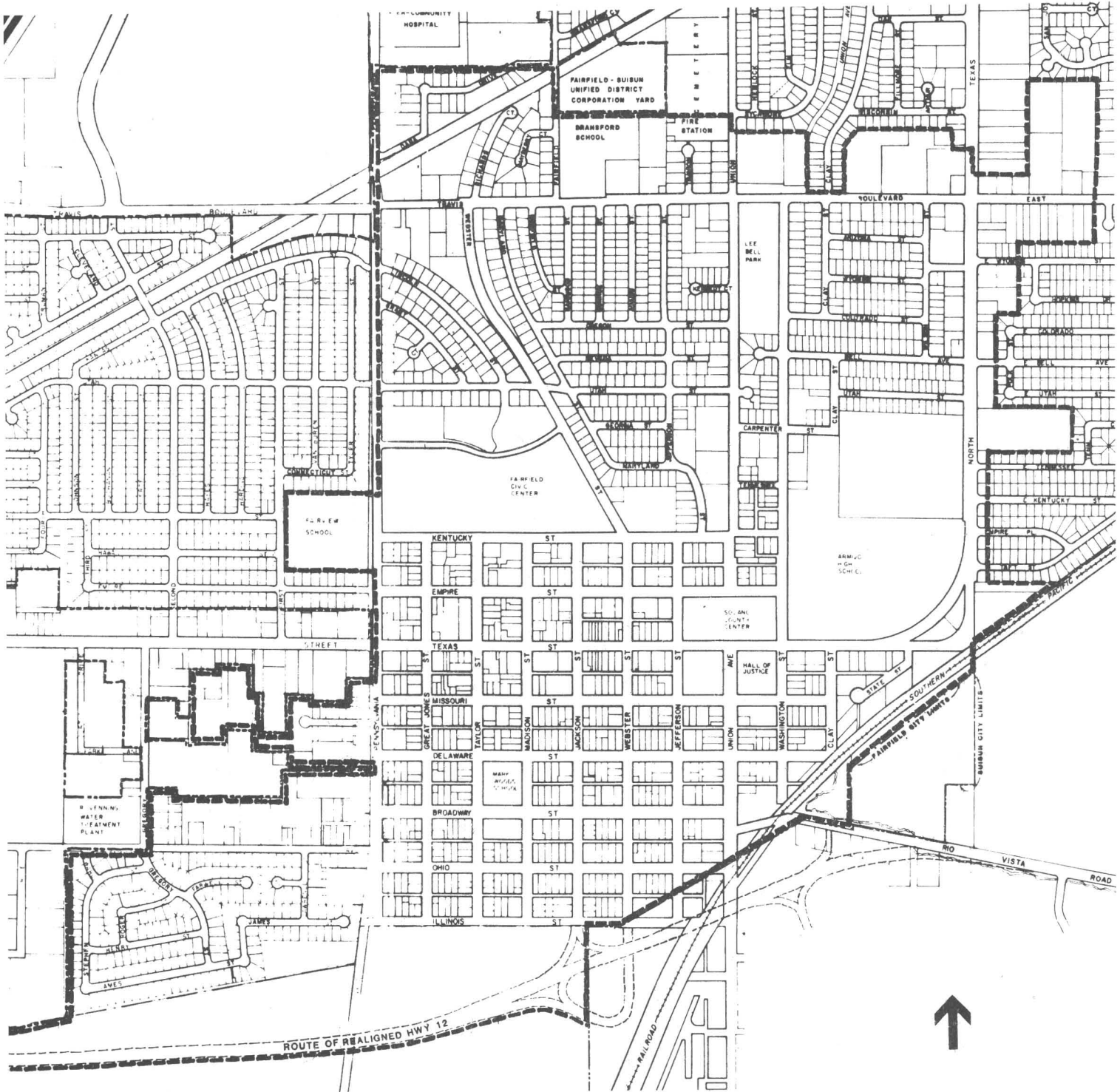
general on the development of the Solano County Civic Center. The Solano Republican gives week-by-week accounts of the physical and social development of Fairfield. Two other sources proved helpful as well. The Minutes of the Fairfield Town Board of Trustees chart the public improvements and annexations of the City of Fairfield. The Architect and Engineer magazine was especially useful in documenting certain buildings and architects. Thanks must go to the staff of the Solano County Library, and to the employees and officials of Solano County, who have given generously of their time and knowledge.

Almost by definition, a survey of cultural resources is a tabulation of the progressive energies of a place. A community's progress, or positive change through time, usually results in something being built. Whether it is a building, such as the Solano County Court House; a structure, such as the Old County Water Tower; or an object like the Fairfield Sign over Texas Street, these artifacts of progressive energies embody to some degree the meaning of a community. It is one of the purposes of the National Register of Historic Places to acknowledge those objects, structures, buildings, sites and districts, throughout the United States, which embody to the highest degree our collective meaning. It is another purpose of the National Register to recognize architectural works of the highest quality. Architectural excellence is usually self-evident to the trained eye. A community's meaning becomes clear only after a careful study of its history. These two dimensions of significance -- architectural and historical -- co-exist in each resource. To assess the genuine significance of a potential historical landmark, each of these dimensions must be brought into sharp focus.

The historical meaning of a community eludes precise definition. The opening section of this report, which gives an interpretive overview of Central Fairfield's historical development, is an attempt to provide the contours of a definition. The next section, Central Fairfield's Cultural Resources, presents in considerable detail the architectural qualities and historical context of those cultural resources which most fully embody significant episodes in Central Fairfield's development. Some of these resources are valuable primarily for their architectural quality, in which case the historical episodes are recounted not so much for their inherent significance as for the light they shed on the circumstances which led to construction or installation of the resources. Finally, conclusions are drawn from this close examination of Central Fairfield's history and architecture. If, in addition to providing a list of cultural resources potentially eligible for inclusion on the National Register, we have brought into sharper focus Fairfield's historical meaning, then we will have provided evocative images and specific opportunities to draw upon in preparing plans, policies and design solutions for the downtown redevelopment project area.

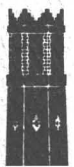
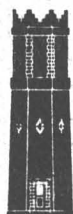
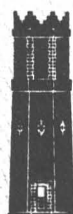
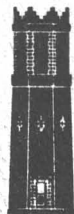
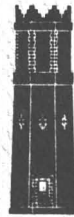


PROJECT AREA LOCATION
FAIRFIELD IN RELATION TO THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



**CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY PROJECT AREA
CENTRAL FAIRFIELD**

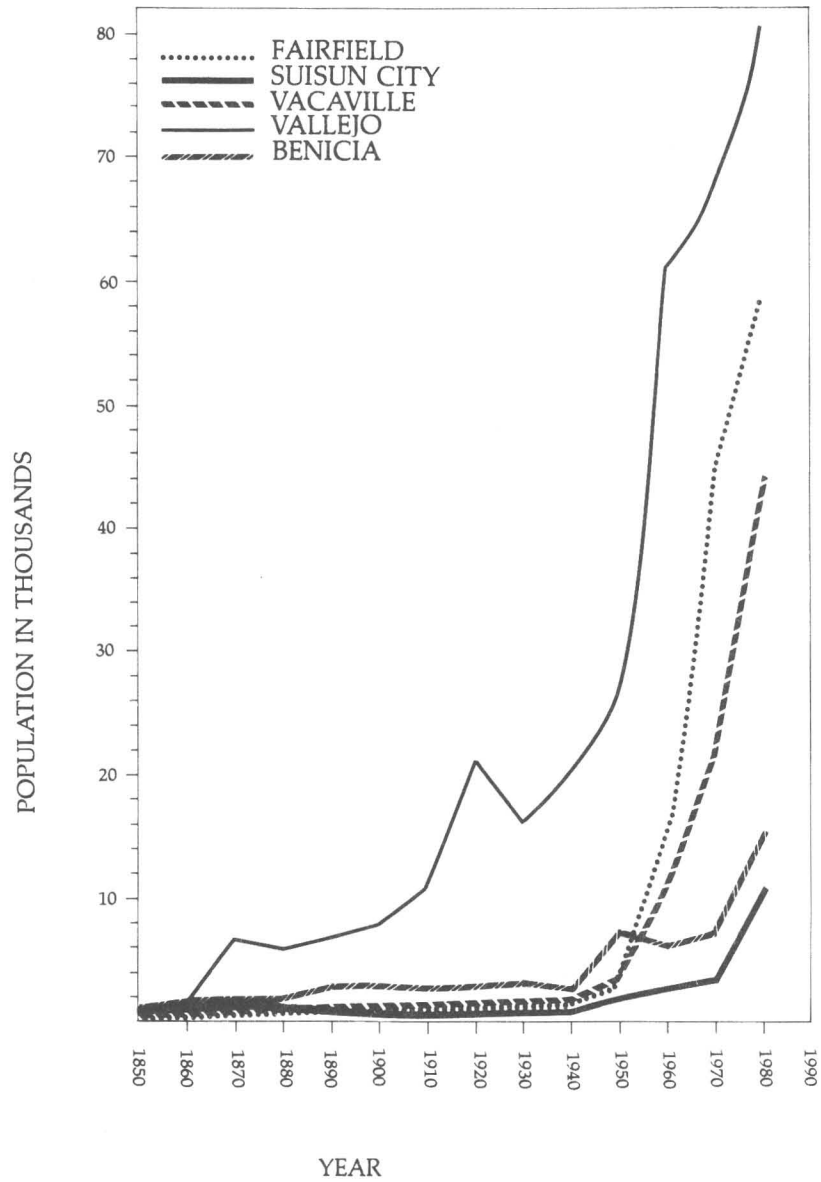
CENTRAL FAIRFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT



A CENTRAL FAIRFIELD CHRONOLOGY

- 1856 Fairfield laid out by Capt. Waterman just north of the marsh separating Suisun City from the mainland.
- 1858 County election results in county seat being transferred from Benicia to Fairfield. Temporary Court House built.
- 1860 Solano County Court House and Jail completed in Fairfield.
- 1861 Methodist Church completed.
- 1868 Suisun City connected to the Central Pacific Railroad.
- 1870 Population of Fairfield: 329.
- 1878 Hall of Records erected west of Court House; connected by elevated steel corridor.
- 1880 Population of Fairfield: 424.
- 1887 Addition constructed to join together Court House and Hall of Records, creating one building.
- 1890 Population of Fairfield: 505.
- 1892 Earthquake destroys the Methodist Church, and causes minor damage to the Court House and Jail.
- 1893 New Methodist Church completed on the site of the destroyed 1861 church.
- 1894 The first Armijo Union High School completed on former County property on Union Avenue south of Texas Street.
- 1894 Solano County wins \$5,000.00 gold cup at the 1894 Midwinter Fair in San Francisco.
- 1903 The City of Fairfield incorporated; population: approximately 700.
- 1904-08 Some streets graded and curbed, sidewalks laid, street trees planted, including the palm trees on Texas Street and Union Avenue.
- 1907 Successful \$20,000.00 bond election to construct and maintain a sewer system.

- 1908 New County Jail completed.
- 1909 Fire destorys business block on Texas Street.
- 1910 Population of Fairfield: 834.
- c. 1910-
- 1912 Goosen House constructed.
- 1911 New County Court House constructed.
- 1913 The Northern Electric interurban electric railway established between Sacramento and Vallejo with connection in Suisun City.
- 1914 New Armijo High School completed on the site of the first high school building.
- 1915 State Highway through Solano County completed; it is routed through Fairfield on Texas Street, bypassing Suisun City.
- 1916 Successful bond election of \$48,500.00 for the grading, paving and draining of public streets in Fairfield.
- 1917 New (reconstructed) Methodist Church opened on the site of the 1893 building.
- 1919 County water tower constructed on the grounds behind the County Jail.
- 1920 Population of Fairfield: 1,008.
- 1920 Solano County Hospital completed on West Texas Street.
- 1923 The Solano Republican offices moved from Suisun City to Fairfield.
- 1924-25 Fairfield sign installed over Texas Street following a successful campaign by the newly established Lions Club.
- 1926 Town Water Dept. created after the purchase of the Fairfield Water Works from Henry Goosen.
- 1930 Population of Fairfield: 1,131.
- 1930 Armijo Auditorium completed.
- 1931 Successful bond election for \$48,000.00 to sink new well, overhaul pipes and sewers, and construct steel water tower.



POPULATION GROWTH OF
SELECTED SOLANO COUNTY CITIES,
1850-1980

- 1931 California Packing Company closes its dried fruit-packing plant in Fairfield - followed a few years later by the Armsby plant.
- 1931 Solano County Free Library and Office Building completed at Texas Street and Union Avenue.
- 1932 Steel tank and tower erected by the Fairfield Water Works.
- 1938 "Town of Fairfield" becomes "City of Fairfield."
- 1940 Population of Fairfield: 1,312.
- 1942 Construction of the Fairfield-Suisun Army Airfield commenced.
- 1942 City of Fairfield passes Ordinance #129 in April, relating to the construction of Defense Housing with the suspension of normal code provisions to expedite the work. Construction of Waterman Park.
- 1945 Fairfield Planning Commission created.
- 1945-49 Reconstruction of Fairfield-Suisun Army Airbase as a major airfield for the Strategic Air Command; renamed Travis Air Force Base in 1950.
- 1946 Zoning ordinance plan adopted by City of Fairfield.
- 1946-49 First annexations to the City of Fairfield since the original plat of 1856. Waterman Park was the first (1/15/46).
- 1948-49 New County Office Building constructed west of Court House.
- 1949 Successful bond election of \$85,000 to construct new sewers, streets and a fire house.
- 1950 Population of Fairfield: 3,118.
- 1957 Monticello Dam completed.
- 1960 Population of Fairfield: 14,968.
- c. 1960 Interstate 80 opened, bypassing Fairfield.
- 1966 Travis AFB and surrounding residential complex annexed.

- 1970 Population of Fairfield: 44,146.
- 1970 Old Armijo Union High School reconstructed as the
Solano County Hall of Justice.
- 1972 New Fairfield Civic Center completed.
- 1976 Hall of Justice II built as south wing of Hall of
Justice.
- 1980 Population of Fairfield: 58,099.

CENTRAL FAIRFIELD'S DEVELOPMENT

The Land and Its First Inhabitants

Bounded on the south and southeast by the marsh-fringed waters of the Sacramento River and the Suisun and San Pablo Bays, and on the west by the ridgelines of the Blue Mountains and other coastal ranges, Solano County's rich agricultural lands extend north to Putah Creek and east to an arbitrary straight-line border near the city of Davis. Created by an act of the California Legislature in 1850, Solano County is one of seven counties bordering the extensive shoreline of San Francisco Bay.

The rounded oak-studded hills and spacious waterlands lend great beauty to the western and central portion of the county, and the valley flatlands have been a source of agricultural wealth since the first days of widespread American settlement in the 1850s.

The Patwin Subgroup of California Indians lived in present day Solano County before the arrival of the Hispanic and American cultures. Organized into tribelets, they lived in small villages and organized their lives around the primary activities of food-gathering and warfare. They resided in small settlements scattered widely over the landscape. At least one permanent and important Patwin settlement was located near present-day Fairfield.

With the founding of the San Francisco Mission and Presidio in 1776, and the San Jose and Santa Clara Missions soon after, the European presence established itself in the San Francisco Bay Area. Warfare between the Spanish settlers and the Patwin Indians broke out by 1810. The Spanish had not yet penetrated the lands north of the Carquinez Strait and Suisun Bay; the Patwins, however, had begun traveling south to steal horses and raid the intruders' settlements. Beginning in 1810, the Spanish mounted a series of reprisals. The last major skirmish, in 1817, ended with the defeat of a large group of Patwin Indians

in the vicinity of the future site of Fairfield. The Indians were relocated to Mission compounds.

By 1823, a Spanish Padre surveying the valleys along the eastern slope of the Coast Range in present day Solano County reported only abandoned and collapsed dwellings. The first phase of development -- the thousands of years of habitation by the Patwin Indian -- had come to a sudden and violent end. A small tribe of Patwins under Chief Sam Yeto (Christened Francisco Solano at the the Sonoma Mission in 1824) survived in the vicinity of present day Rockville. A virulent smallpox epidemic beginning in 1837 decimated even this small remnant. Chief Solano sold his Suisun Rancho - comprising all of Suisun Valley, including present day Fairfield - to General Vallejo, for \$1,000.00, in 1842.

The First Settlers

The 1840s were a period of transition for the region. The first Hispanic settlers arrived around 1840. Jose Francisco Armijo had received a land grant comprised of the northern and eastern portions of Suisun Valley and Tolena Valley. He built a small abode house on a knoll east of Suisun Creek, and began raising cattle. His son Antonio built another house near his father's and also began raising cattle. Juan Manuel Vaca and Juan Felipe Pena were granted Lagoon and Vaca Valleys and lands north. They arrived in 1842, building houses near each other about two miles southwest of what is now central Vacaville. They too raised cattle. The Pena Adobe is the only building in the vicinity of Fairfield surviving from this early phase of Hispanic settlement.

The first American settler in Solano County was the successful and innovative farmer, John Wolfskill, who settled at the northern boundary, along Putah Creek in 1842. By 1847, a scattering of American families had established small farms in Green Valley and Vaca Valley.

Following the Bear Flag Revolt, in 1846, California was admitted to the United States. With the discovery of gold in the American River near Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848, and the ensuing exodus of tens of thousands of hopeful people to California, the developmental history of the San Francisco Bay area was irrevocably altered. San Francisco, the port of entry to the gold fields, was an instant metropolis, the premier City of the West. Many would-be prospectors, on their way to the Mother Lode, traveled through the region that was to become Solano County. The impact of this on the area was twofold: an increased demand which greatly stimulated local agriculture; and eventually an increased population, as some of the immigrants, disappointed in the gold fields, returned to Solano County to settle as farmers.

The boundaries of Solano County were set, and California entered the Union, in 1850. So prosperous was the raising of fruit and vegetables, that a special 1852 census revealed 2,835 persons living in Solano County. The transitional period was over. The American culture had appropriated California with astonishing energy. The developmental history of Solano County had entered a definitive new phase.

The American Pattern

With few exceptions the towns established in the Bay Area just before the gold rush and during it were situated on the Bay or on navigable sloughs and creeks tributary to it. Solano County was true to this pattern. The earliest towns of Solano County were generally contained in a zone flanking the southern and eastern slopes of the Coast Range, with access to the Bay.

Benicia, laid out by Dr. Robert Semple and Thomas Larkin in 1847, was meant to rival San Francisco as the great metropolis of the West Coast. It was sited on the Carquinez Strait, on deep water, approximately midway between the Golden Gate and the vast interior valleys of California. Although it was culturally, socially, and for a brief period, politically, important in California, it never threatened San Francisco's urban supremacy. Benicia drifted into the 20th century, its population not topping 3,000 until World War II.

Vallejo was established on deep waters at the confluence of Carquinez Strait and the Napa River. It was an instant city, consisting of land donated by General Mariano Vallejo in 1850 to the California Legislature, of which he was a member, to induce them to build the State Capital there. General Vallejo was never able to realize his dream, and the Capital passed to Benicia in 1853, and then on to Sacramento soon after, where it stayed. Vallejo's growth was linked to the coincidental establishment of the U.S. Navy Yard on Mare Island in 1854. Since 1870, Vallejo has been the most populous city in Solano County.

Both Benicia and Vallejo had been founded somewhat artificially in the grandiose hope of attaining social and political glory. The aims of two small towns founded in the early 1850s along the eastern slope of the coastal range, northeast of Benicia, were much more modest. Cordelia and Suisun City shared the pragmatic goal of capitalizing on the burgeoning fruit and vegetable production of central Solano County. They faced San Francisco, so to speak, at the heads of navigable sloughs that led south to Suisun Bay. They were sited at the interface of the waterlands and the farmlands, the valleys and gently rolling hills at their back, the flat boggy expanse of the Delta before them.

Robert Waterman, a former clipper ship captain, decided to locate a major townsite on Suisun Marsh in the early 1850s. He had purchased one third interest in the Suisun Rancho for \$16,000 in 1850. His partner, A. A. Ritchie, who had bought the Rancho from General Vallejo for \$50,000, died accidentally in 1852, leaving full title to Waterman. His Suisun Rancho encompassed most of Suisun Valley and what is now Cordelia and Central Fairfield, also including the solid land along the fringe of the Marsh from Green Valley Creek to Laurel Creek. Along this fringe, there were three waterways through which boats could reach dry land without great difficulty -- the passages now called Cordelia Channel, Suisun Creek and Suisun Slough. Waterman believed that a site at the head of Cordelia Slough would be the best place to establish a port to ship the produce of central Solano County. He felt confident in his enterprise, for he was under the impression that he held title to the other possible sites and could exclude any competitors. Waterman named his new town Cordelia, for his wife.

Cordelia failed. By a fluke of nature, and an oversight on Waterman's part, Josiah Wing was able to sail up Suisun Slough and establish a shipping point on a small area that rose five feet above the surrounding marsh, separated from the mainland by 100 yards of marsh. By definition of the Suisun grant, which included all dry land up to the edge of the marsh, Wing's "island" fell just beyond Waterman's claims.

Wing established an embarcadero for agricultural products from the area. Wing's new town, which became known as Suisun City, was a success from the beginning. It could draw on a larger agricultural region, for it was five miles closer than Cordelia to the Lagoon and Vaca Valleys. By 1852, the traffic at Wing's embarcadero required the construction of a wharf and a warehouse. These facilities were expanded, a general store and other buildings went up, and in 1854, Suisun City's streets were laid out.

It was in this context of rivalry and defeat that Waterman, in 1856, laid out another town just north of the marsh which separated Suisun City from the mainland. He named the new town Fairfield, after the Connecticut town in which he was raised.

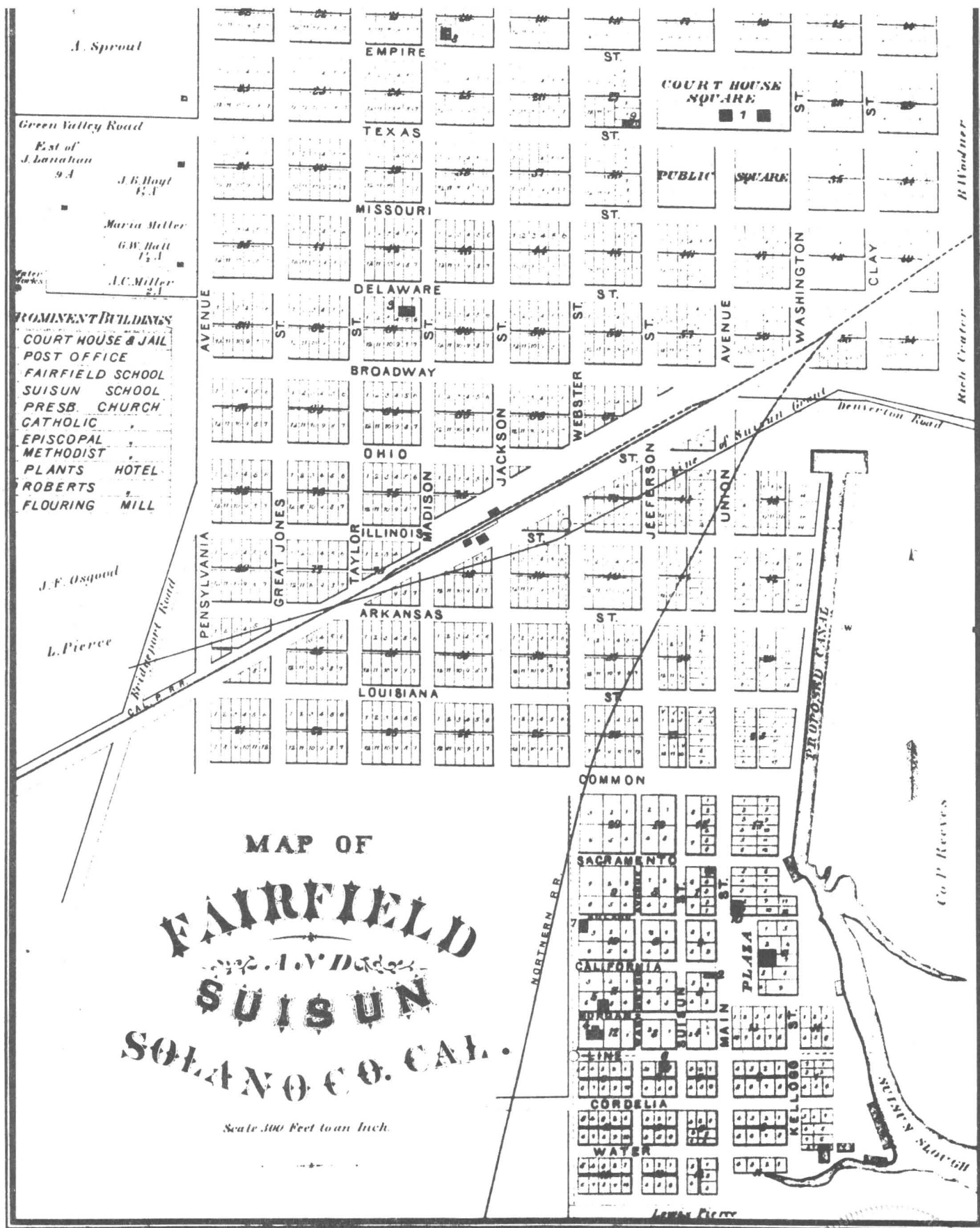
Fairfield's Early Development: 1856-1903

Fairfield got off to a good start, thanks to the aggressive plans of Captain Waterman. He promoted the moving of the county seat from Benicia to Fairfield in 1858, offering as inducement sixteen acres to the County, and certain other properties. In the election held on September 2, 1858, Fairfield received 1029 votes, Benicia received 625, and Vallejo 10. The latter city voted for Fairfield to spite Benicia, which had taken the State Capital from them in 1853.

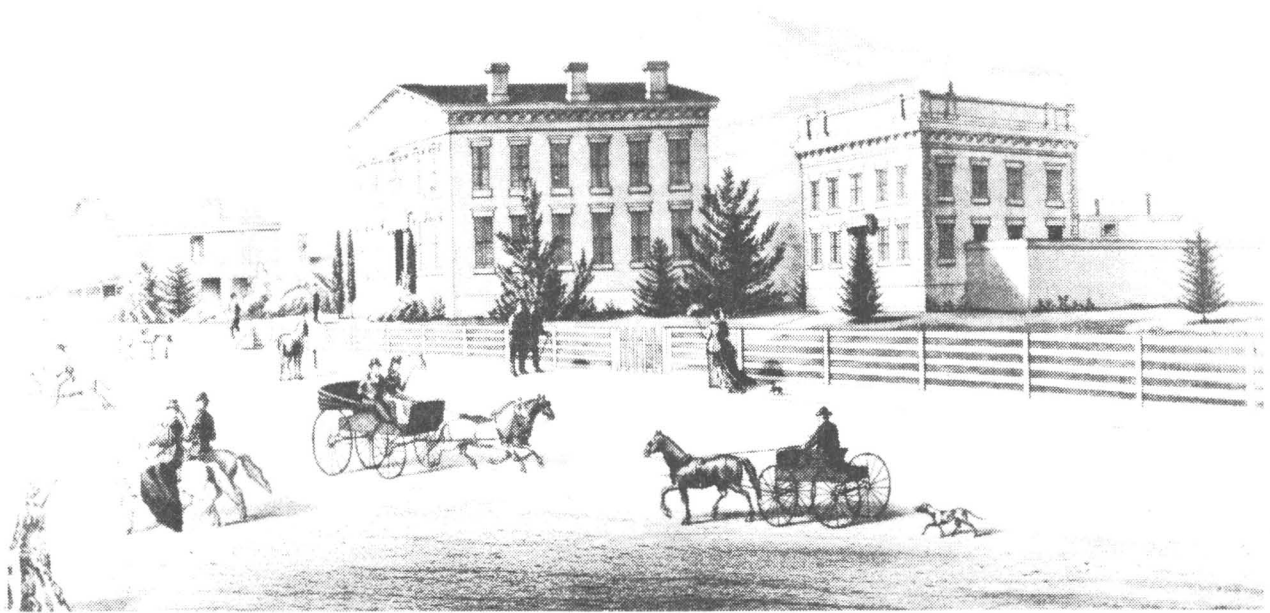
It was an astonishing coup for Waterman. The County records were immediately moved to a temporary Court House on Missouri Street in Fairfield, and Fairfield was to remain "The County Seat of Solano County," in spite of a subsequent attempt by Vallejo to wrest it away in 1873. It is important to understand Fairfield's 19th-century role as the Solano County seat. This public governmental function was its initial raison d'etre, and its primary identity throughout the 19th century.

Fairfield's commercial importance was totally overshadowed by neighboring Suisun City, whose waterfront site gave it a long-lasting transportation advantage. Central Solano county's largest stores lined Main Street and the Plaza in Suisun City. Here too were the area's only bank, a brick hotel, saloons and restaurants. When the Central Pacific Railroad -- moving eastward from Vallejo to meet the transcontinental tracks in Sacramento -- reached the Fairfield-Suisun area in the summer of 1868, it was routed through Suisun City. This caused much celebration, and precipitated the town's incorporation the following October. Ironically, the completion of the transcontinental railroad partially hindered Suisun City's economic growth by reducing its trading area, and by competing directly with water transportation. However, the waterfront played an important role as Suisun shippers continued to handle farm products at competitive rates. The railroad was a factor in local prosperity, as well. During the 1880s and '90s, several large fruit packing companies, including the J. K. Armsby Cannery, built plants along the railroad tracks which ran through town. As Suisun City's trade and industry gradually expanded, dry land in the town became scarce, and Fairfield's spacious lots became more popular homesites for the area's town-dwellers. By 1890, the neighboring towns had approximately equal populations (Fairfield: 505; Suisun: 499); by 1900, Fairfield's lead grew to nearly 100, and the gap would widen with the ensuing decades.

Fairfield's appearance in the 19th century, and the first years of the 20th, was derived from its original plat, the buildings constructed along its streets, and the trees and shrubs planted there. The plat was the classic American grid, a checker-board of equally spaced streets meeting at right angles. The square grid had a slanted side along the southern edge, where it abutted the diagonal of the Central Pacific tracks and the Suisun City limit. The streets were 75 feet in width, with the exception of Broadway and Union Avenue, each 100 feet wide. Broadway was perhaps meant to be the grand residential street of Fairfield. The blocks throughout the grid were 300 feet on a side; each was divided into 12 lots measuring 50 feet x 150 feet. A distinguishing characteristic were the narrow alleys which bisected every block.



Map of Fairfield and Suisun City, c. 1875. This indicates the land donated to the County by Waterman, which evolved into the Solano County Civic Center. The Court House, Jail and Methodist Church, as well as the first grammar school and hotel, also are shown. The classic grid (and the street names) already had been established. Map from the 1878 Thompson and West Atlas.



The original Court House and Jail, erected in 1860, as they looked in the 1870s. The building on the left is probably the old Plants Hotel, formerly on the northwest corner of Texas and Jefferson Streets. Note the bell tower of the Methodist Church, between the hotel and the Court House. Along with the grammar school, these were the principal buildings of Fairfield in its first years. Engraving from the 1878 Thompson and West Atlas.

The major exception to the regularity of Fairfield's grid were the four blocks donated by Captain Waterman to Solano County, bounded by Empire, Washington, Missouri and Jefferson Streets. The two blocks north of Texas Street were never divided by Union Avenue; they formed one large rectangular block, called "Court House Square." The two separate County blocks south of Texas Street were divided by Union Avenue; however, like the Court House Square, they were never bisected by alleys. Texas Street, the east-west street which bisected the County blocks, connected on its west end with Rockville Road, the major rural route of the area. Union Avenue, which met Texas Street along the southern edge of Court House Square, bisected the two County blocks south of Texas Street, and headed due south, becoming Main Street in Suisun City. The incorporation of these two important pre-existing arteries into the superimposed grid proved to be decisive in the planning and development of Fairfield. Texas Street became the commercial artery of the town; Union Avenue became the primary civic boulevard; and where they met became the seat of government in Solano County.

The first important buildings to be constructed within this grid were, naturally, for the county. The Solano County Court House and Jail were built on Court House Square in 1860. The Court House was sited facing Union Avenue, thereby taking advantage of the splendid perspective down the long straight boulevard. A merchant traversing Main Street at the Plaza in Suisun City could clearly see the Court House three-quarters of a mile to the north. The visual linking of the Solano County Court House with Solano County's most important interior port, symbolically emphasized the County's orientation to San Francisco Bay. This conscious urbanistic siting of the first Court House realized the possibilities of the grid, and established a precedent for the creation of a noble and dignified civic center in the first decades of the 20th century.

Another prominent early building was the old Plants Hotel, on the corner of Texas and Jefferson Streets, across from Court House Square. This hotel probably served visitors conducting business at the Court House. The original hotel was a plain wooden building with gabled roof. It was replaced in the 1880s or '90s with the Fairfield Hotel, a two-story hip-roofed building with a square corner tower. A small business district grew up along several blocks of Texas Street west of the hotel, the beginnings of the downtown which was to achieve maturity with the routing of the State Highway along Texas Street in 1915. These were exclusively wooden buildings, one and two storied, often with false fronts. The small Italianate building presently at 748 Broadway was originally sited on Webster Street immediately north of Texas Street. It is a particularly stylish example of Fairfield's 19th-century commercial architecture, and very similar to the Fairfield Post Office erected on

the Court House Square in 1879. The small building on the alley behind 836 Delaware Street, with its stepped false front and lack of decoration, is more representative of stores built in Fairfield in the 19th century. It was originally situated on the 900 block of Texas Street.

The other major landmark of Fairfield through the 1880s, along with the County buildings and the hotel, was the Methodist Church erected on the northeast corner of Empire and Madison Streets in 1860-61. It is significant that the church located on Empire Street and not on, say, Broadway. Empire Street became one of Fairfield's foremost residential streets. The focus of Fairfield's developmental energies would tend to be along and adjoining the Texas Street axis. The only important public building situated in the southern portion of the town was the Fairfield Grammar School, erected on the corner of Delaware and Madison Streets in the 1860s. The two prototypical axes of Texas Street and Union Avenue, particularly the former, were the lines of force around which most of Fairfield's significant developments were to cluster. Where they intersected was the heart of Solano County's government.

In the 1890s, two new public buildings, reflecting the more decorative tastes of the day, were added to Fairfield's skyline. The new Methodist Church, replacing the brick church destroyed in the 1892 earthquake, featured a handsome two-story bell tower. The first Armijo Union High School, a pleasantly informal and decorative Queen Anne structure, was built on one of the County blocks south of Texas Street, on the east side of Union Avenue. The scale of the high school building complemented the Court House and Jail across Texas Street. It initiated a tradition of architectural cooperation between the Armijo Union School District and Solano County, which resulted in the creation of impressive ensembles of civic buildings.

Approximately 100 houses were built in Fairfield in the 19th century. They were, typically, small wood-frame dwellings, one story in height, undecorated save in rare cases. They were distributed across the blocks of the grid, sometimes on parcels assembled from two or more lots; their generally small dimensions enhanced the sense of spaciousness of the lots and streets. The house at 729 Great Jones Street, in its lush setting, is a highly evocative representative of the period. The houses at 604 and 614 Empire Street are typical, as are those at 811 and 908 Union Avenue. All are small gabled dwellings with projecting porches; decorative detailing, if any, is generally restricted to turned porch posts. In the 1890s, houses tended to be more decorative and complex in form. The cottage at 925 Delaware Street, with its lacey gablework and sawn brackets, is an excellent example, as is the house at 702 Broadway, with its square turret and wrap-around porch supported by turned posts with jig-sawn brackets. Beginning in



The first Armijo Union High School, completed in 1894. Photograph probably dates from the 1890s. Note the raised plank sidewalk in the lower right foreground; it ran along Union Avenue between Fairfield and Suisun City, and was one of the first public improvements of either Town. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

the 1890s, another type came into vogue, lasting to about 1910. It featured a hip roof with recessed porch, as in the cottage at 801 Great Jones Street. Broadway is lined with a number of cottages of this type. Large "stylish" houses -- the Italianates, Stick-Eastlakes and Queen Annes that one could find in Vallejo, Vacaville and Suisun City -- were never built in Fairfield, reflecting at once the generally modest incomes and modest self-image of its 19th-century inhabitants. When the Methodist Church parsonage was erected in 1900, The Solano Republican could praise the house as "...by far the most beautiful and commodious residence in town." Yet the house -- which survives at 928 Empire Street, next to the Old Methodist Church -- is a relatively plain one and one-half story structure.

Fairfield at the end of the 19th century was a town of approximately 700 people. The controlling axes within the gridiron pattern of its streets were the east-west Texas Street, which was the principal entry into the town, and the north-south Union Avenue, which connected Fairfield with the rail and water transportation facilities of Suisun City. At the intersection of these axes was a small but impressive group of civic buildings, all directly or indirectly a result of the county government. Fairfield's identity was preponderantly that of the seat of government of Solano County; this was reflected, with remarkable consistency, in the configuration and development of its streets and in the form and distribution of its buildings. The new century would bring a deeper and more complex identity, and with it a richer architectural expression.

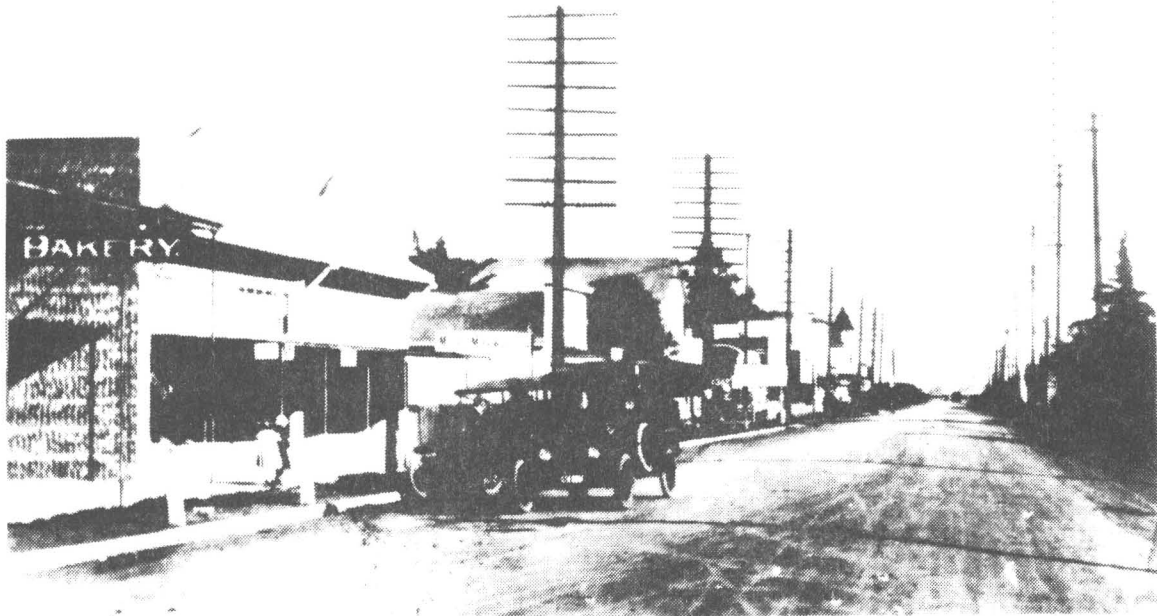
Fairfield's Coming of Age, 1903-1942

It took 45 years for Fairfield's sense of itself as an independent community to catch up with its formative identity as a county seat. The "Town of Fairfield" was incorporated on December 12, 1903. This date marked the beginning of a decisively new phase in the community's development. In the following decades Fairfield would transform itself from a quasi-rural county seat into a confident, expanding city.

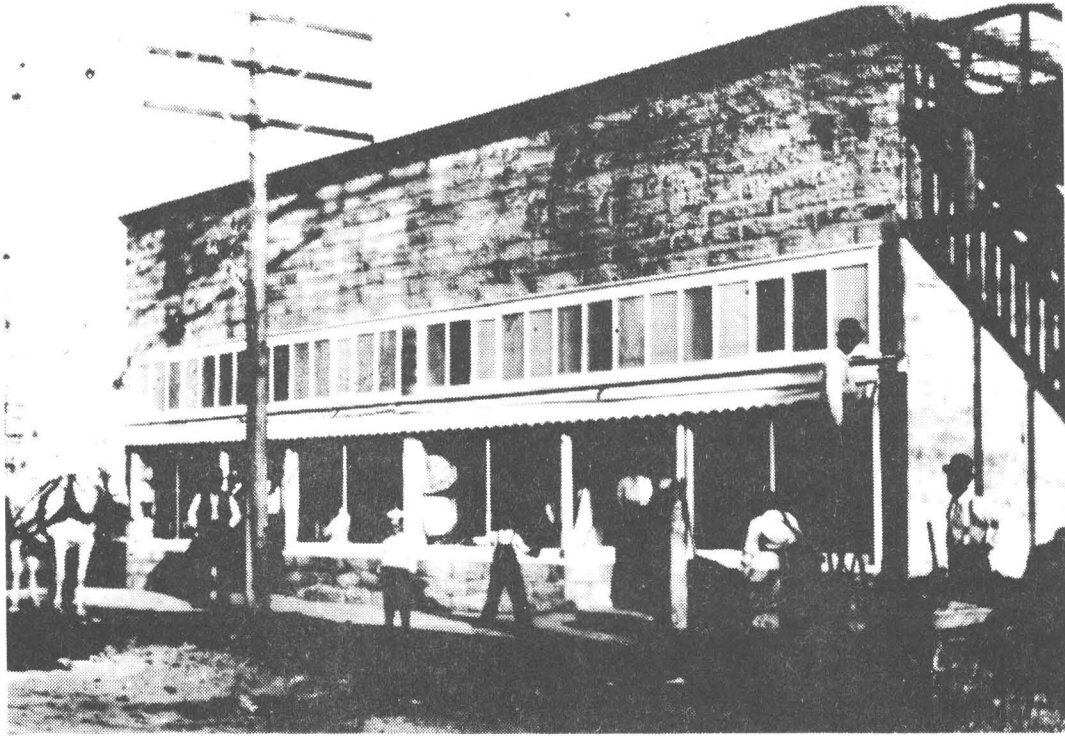
The town's growth remained extremely slow during this period. Its population crept to just over 1,000 in 1920, and merely topped 1,300 in 1940. The town's boundaries remained the same. But its development during these years must be read in more than population figures, and its growth gauged by indicators other than acres. Once again, it is a question of identity, and of the physical expressions of that identity. Fairfield's identity underwent a dramatic transformation following a discreet historical event -- the routing of the new State Highway along Texas Street in 1915. Just as Suisun City's instant prosperity had been a direct result of its location on a navi-



This view looking east on Texas Street shows Fairfield's downtown as it looked soon after the Town's incorporation in 1903. Note the unimproved condition of Texas Street. Henry Goosen's "General Hardware" store, on the left, was established on Texas Street in 1904. He moved his business to a new reinforced concrete building in 1909. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



Texas Street, looking east, c. 1915. The automobiles are a change, as is the curbed, graded and paved street. The new State Highway helped transform Fairfield from a quasi-rural county seat into a prosperous, confident and growing city. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



Henry Goosen's reinforced concrete store under construction on Texas Street, 1909. Goosen's old store and residence had nearly been destroyed by fire earlier that year; he was quick to pick up on the "fireproof" capabilities of the new construction technique. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

gable waterway leading to San Francisco Bay, Fairfield's prosperity and pride leaped ahead when it was linked with the state-of-the-art transportation network of its day. The public drive that resulted in the acquisition of the Fairfield Sign and its installation over Texas Street in 1925 fully symbolized the new Fairfield.

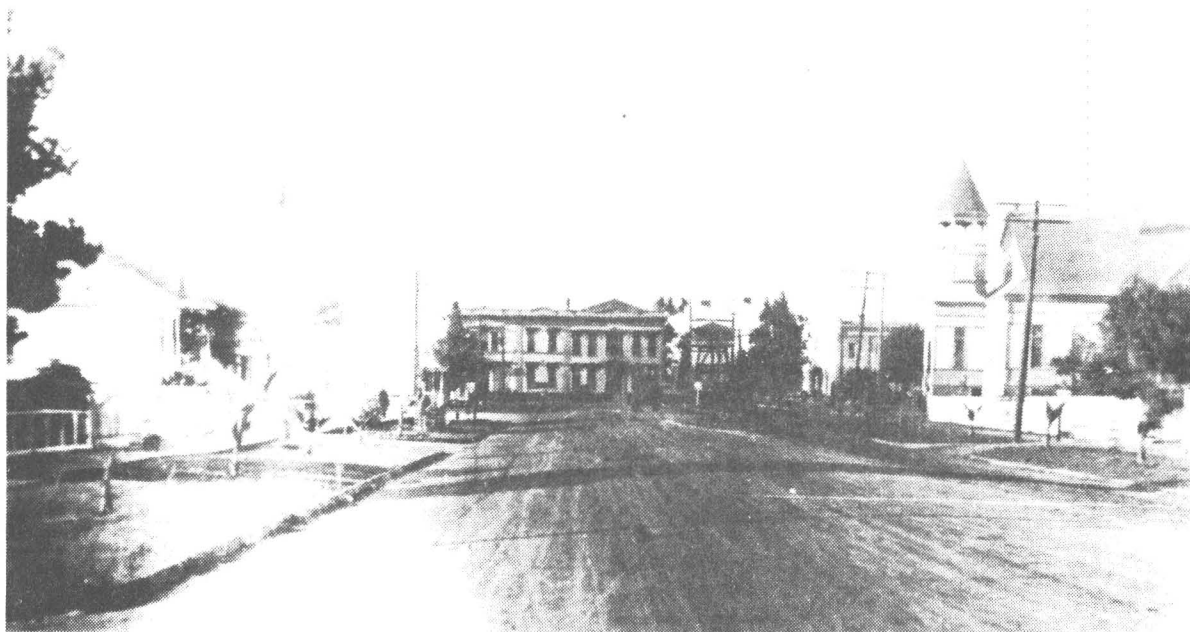
The years following incorporation, prior to the opening of the State Highway, were ones of consolidation and refinement of existing patterns and attitudes. Beginning in 1904, the Town Trustees passed a number of ordinances relating to public improvements such as street grading, curb and sidewalk construction, and the planting of street trees. This first flurry of activity was highlighted by a successful \$20,000 bond election on July 23, 1907, to construct and maintain a sewer system. Characteristically, most of the street improvements and new sidewalk construction occurred on Texas Street and Union Avenue. Texas Street was paved "...from Union Avenue to the western limits of the city..." during the summer of 1911. Union Avenue was probably paved soon after. Palm trees had been planted, presumably by the Town of Fairfield around 1908, facing the County blocks on Texas Street and Union Avenue. Yet as late as 1920, most residential streets in Fairfield had no sidewalks or trees.

Between 1907 and 1914, the civic buildings clustered around the intersection of Texas Street and Union Avenue were rebuilt. The new County Jail was completed in 1908, the new Court House in 1911, and the new Armijo Union High School in 1914. All were of high architectural quality, and represented the combined efforts of architects from San Francisco to Sacramento. The new Jail was an architectural curiosity, a Gothic Revival dungeon in reinforced concrete. The Court House and High School were both excellent examples of the Neo-Classical Revival. All were set in newly landscaped grounds. The Court House was once again sited at the head of Union Avenue. The new Solano County Civic Center was an urbanistic achievement which reinforced pre-existing patterns while enhancing the stature of the county seat. As it was added to over the next twenty years, achieving a sense of completion with the Solano County Free Library and Office Building on the southwest County block in 1931, it represented the final refinement of the physical form assumed by the County government since its installation in the new county seat in 1858. Fairfield's identity as the county seat was correspondingly deepened and ennobled by the new forms.

In the years immediately preceding the completion of the State Highway in 1915, the Fairfield-Suisun area experienced a period of heady optimism. Solano County was prospering as never before. The newspaper was full of articles about the "proposed



Court House and Jail, looking north on Union Avenue, c. 1908. The newly completed Jail stands to the right of the 1887 Court House, with an old water tank between them. Note the unimproved condition of Union Avenue. Photograph courtesy of the Central Solano County Cultural Heritage Commission.



Court House and Jail, looking north on Union Avenue, a year or two later. Union Avenue has been graded, curbed and lined with palm trees. This cluster of civic buildings has evolved into the Solano County Civic Center of today. The small wood-frame buildings on the left, or their successors, were removed in 1930 for the construction of the library. The new Court House may have been under construction behind the old one when this photograph was taken. Its siting at the head of Union Avenue took advantage of the visual corridor to Suisun City. Photograph courtesy of the Solano County Treasurer's Office.

\$18,000,000 highway" in the spring and summer of 1911, and the beautiful new Court House taking shape behind the old one seemed to confirm the County's bright future. Yet, ironically, it was the routing of two new interurban electric railways in the vicinity of Suisun City in the summer of 1913 that caused the most feverish excitement.

The Northern Electric Railroad, which ran from Vallejo to Sacramento, was routed through Suisun City in the summer of 1913. A new depot was built, and freight and passenger service commenced by the end of the year. Another new electric interurban railway, the Oakland & Antioch Railroad, extended north to Sacramento. Its tracks ran through the open country between Suisun City and Rio Vista. The Solano Irrigated Farms Company attempted to lay out a new city on the line. Named "Solano," it was to have been built on the flatlands between Suisun City and Rio Vista. The Solano Republican was rife with articles in the spring and summer of 1913 about the new city; the grand opening of the site on Sunday, August 17, coincided with the arrival of the first train along the newly completed O&ARR. The newspaper reported, "The day's sales of lots and farm lands brought the total past the million dollar mark for a 50-day campaign." Yet nothing was built, and Solano, and the electrical railroad that promoted it, are forgotten today.

Considering the tremendous excitement of that summer, it is not surprising that Suisun City formed a Chamber of Commerce. Its first regular meeting was held on August 20, 1913. Significantly, the speaker was a division engineer from the State Highway Commission. The automobile and the highway were the future. Suisun City rose, and declined, with the transportation technologies of its day. Even as the Northern Electric was installing its new system, it was outmoded by the automobile. The Suisun City Chamber of Commerce disbanded after several years. When its spirit was revived, it was in the Fairfield Lions Club of 1924. And it was this organization which was directly responsible for the installation of the Fairfield Sign over Texas Street in 1925. When the Transcontinental Highway was completed in 1926, motorists from New York or Chicago on their way to San Francisco would pass through the prosperous town with its impressive group of civic buildings, a sign over the highway proclaiming it to be "Fairfield -- County Seat of Solano County."

Fairfield, Suisun City and the rest of Solano County, were hard hit by the Depression. The fruit-packing plants in Fairfield and Suisun City closed. Suisun City's population dropped to its lowest point since 1913. Fairfield, however, grew slightly. The fact that it could float a successful bond with which to erect a steel water tower for its newly refurbished water works in the winter of 1931-32, at the nadir of the Depression,

is indicative perhaps of its vitality and tenacity. The "Town of Fairfield" officially became the "City of Fairfield" following a municipal election in May, 1938.

The appearance of Fairfield at the end of the second phase of its development reflected the change, and the continuity, in its identity. As mentioned, the Solano County Civic Center had been rebuilt with great success. Texas Street had become the town's primary axis, the stores of its business blocks refurbished or rebuilt. For example, the old Fairfield Hotel on the corner of Jefferson and Texas Streets was moved back on its lot and remodelled; on its old site a new concrete building was erected, housing, along with a restaurant and candy store, a club room for the Fairfield Lions Club. For the first time, banks moved to the county seat town. Around 1920, the Fairfield First National Bank constructed a substantial building at 726-30 Texas Street, followed a few years later by another handsome bank at 800 Texas Street in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Houses in Fairfield from this period reflect the growing prosperity and confidence of the town. The first burst of progressive activity following incorporation is aptly expressed by the house at 1120 Empire Street, with its oddly shaped gables and windows compressed with furious energy. The brown shingle house with steeply pitched gable roof at 927 Broadway Street, built in 1908, shows that Fairfield was responsive to new stylistic trends.

But it was with the mansion that Henry Goosen built for himself at 1010 Empire Street that something totally new, and premonitory happened. Completed sometime between 1910 and 1912, this large Colonial Revival house was the first mansion built in Fairfield. In self-conscious stylishness and scale it rivaled anything built in Suisun City in the 19th century. Its size was a quantum leap beyond anything built before, or since, in Central Fairfield; it still appears huge in the context of the town. Goosen, an entrepreneur who owned the Fairfield Water Works and a hardware business on Texas Street, symbolized the new Fairfield. His house, along with the 1911 Court House and the 1914 High School, are the principal monuments of a significant classical phase in Fairfield's architectural development.

As the teens progressed, up-to-date bungalows were built, such as the ones at 826 Empire, 745 Jackson and 1240 Ohio Streets. By the mid-1920s, about the time the Fairfield Sign was erected, a number of stylish period-revival dwellings were constructed. The house at 825 Empire Street was built for one of the leading businessmen in town, a hardware store owner who belonged to the Lions Club. The French Provincial house on the northeast corner of Missouri and Webster Streets is another excellent example. The Freitas House, built in 1926 at the



Aerial view of Central Fairfield, c. 1920. The new State Highway is very much in evidence, as is the Solano County Civic Center with its brand new water tower. Fairfield had achieved a mature sense of identity and form by the 1920s. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



Texas Street, looking east, c. 1935. This bustling little downtown is a very different place than it was at the turn of the century. The electric sign suspended over Texas Street proclaims that this is "Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County." Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

southeast corner of Empire and Jackson Streets, perhaps best symbolizes the period. An appealing house that combined the charm of the half-timbered English cottage with forms of the California bungalow, it was the home of John Freitas, Fairfield mayor, and one of the showplaces of the town.

By the beginning of the 1930s, Fairfield had attained a maturity of form and identity. The Solano County Free Library and Office Building, a picturesque structure in the Spanish Colonial Revival, constructed on the remaining County block at the intersection of Texas Street and Union Avenue, completed the Solano County Civic Center. The Fairfield Water Works Tower, erected in 1932 and recently destroyed, was the first structure built by the Town of Fairfield, and for years stood as a symbol of the town and the principal landmark of its skyline. Up until World War II, the town was still encompassed by its original grid, which was nearly filled with buildings. The principal axis remained Texas Street, the secondary axis Union Avenue, which now led to an outmoded and decaying Suisun City. By the advent of the war, Fairfield had largely realized the developmental potential inherent in its dual role as the seat of Solano County government and as a prosperous small city located on a major highway. Fairfield had matured as a community, and was prepared for the challenges and the opportunities of the post-war period.

In 1942, the Army Corps of Engineers began constructing an airbase on the windswept prairie several miles east of Fairfield. Completed in 1943, the Fairfield-Suisun Army Airfield became an important embarkation point for Pacific-bound B-24 bombers. A government housing project to house workers at the airfield was constructed in Fairfield in 1942. Waterman Park, situated north of Kentucky Street between Pennsylvania and Webster Streets, was the first large-scale housing development built in the vicinity of Fairfield. For the first time, the historic grid was ruptured. It was to be a harbinger of the future.

Fairfield's Recent Development: 1945-1980

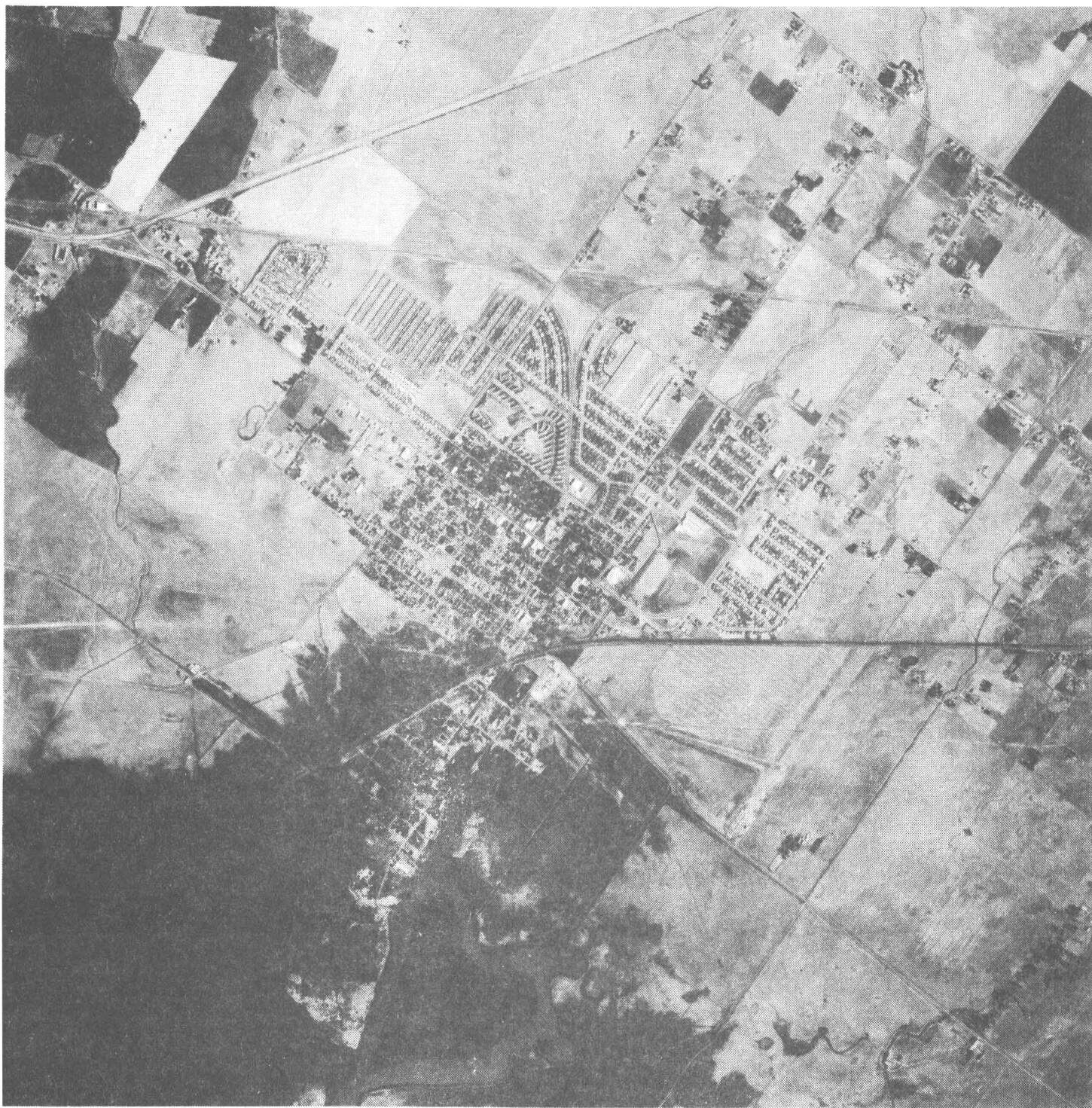
The Fairfield-Suisun Army Airfield was reconstructed as a major airbase between 1945 and 1949. In 1950, following the death of Brigadier General Robert Travis in an air crash, the field was renamed Travis Air Force Base. The base became a major embarkation point to Korea in the early 1950s. By 1955, the base had 10,000 military and non-military employees. Many of these people found homes in Fairfield, Suisun City and Vacaville. Fairfield's growth was by far the most dramatic of the three towns. Its population more than doubled between 1940 and 1950, and during the 1950s the increase was a phenomenal 380% (from 3,118 in 1950 to 14,968 in 1960). Growth continued strong in the 1960s, increasing by nearly 200% (to 44,146 in 1970). Fairfield's population in 1980 stood at 58,099.



This aerial view shows Fairfield from the north in 1951. The original grid of the City, with the defining axes of Texas Street and Union Avenue meeting at the Solano County Civic Center, is clearly seen. The new subdivisions to the north were the first to break out of the grid, beginning with the construction of Waterman Park in 1942 (right foreground). Note Suisun City, Suisun Slough, and Mount Diablo in the background. Photograph courtesy of the Solano County Treasurer's Office.



Waterman Park, street scene, c. 1955. Waterman Park was a federal housing project constructed in 1942, probably for workers building the Fairfield-Suisun Air Base. It was purchased by the City of Fairfield in the early 1950s, who used the administration building as a city hall and rented the residential units. The Fairfield Civic Center, built on the site of Waterman Park in 1972, was partially financed by the rental revenues. Photograph courtesy of the Central Solano County Cultural Heritage Commission.



High altitude photograph of Fairfield and Suisun City, 1953. The configuration of the two cities is revealed in relation to natural features, particularly Suisun Slough, and to man-made features, particularly the adjacent agricultural lands, and the railroad and highway network. The new Interstate Highway 80, under construction, appears as a slash at the top of the picture. Interestingly, new development has been confined primarily to the north of Texas Street. The shape of present day Fairfield is seen here in embryonic form. Photograph courtesy of the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce.

This astonishing explosion of growth was tied directly to Travis A.F.B. through the mid-60s. Travis was annexed by the City of Fairfield in 1966. However, the completion of the new Interstate Highway 80 in the early 1960s brought Fairfield within commuting distance of the employment centers of the San Francisco metropolitan area, providing another source of growth. Suisun City, after its long decline, is now considered one of the fastest growing communities in California. Its population increased from 1,917 in 1970 to 11,087 in 1980.

Fairfield's response to the influx of population after the war included annexing land. In the four-year period between 1946 and 1949 inclusive, the City of Fairfield added over 200 acres to the original 197-acre plat of 1856. Waterman Park was the first, annexed by action of the City Council on January 15, 1946. The City bought Waterman Park from the federal government around 1950. The City offices were moved to the Administration Building on the grounds of the former project, and the City rented the housing units. The other annexations, all north of Texas and Kentucky Streets, were the sites of Fairfield's first post-war subdivisions. The portion of the project area in Central Fairfield north of Kentucky Street is comprised of these early subdivisions. The area is interesting today for its variety of prototypical tract houses.

In 1972, the City of Fairfield built its new Civic Center on the site of Waterman Park. The project was financed by a bond issue bolstered by the profits accumulated from the Waterman Park rentals. The Fairfield Civic Center -- the first major building project undertaken by the City in its 69-year history -- is a modern municipal complex equipped to govern what may become Solano County's largest city. With the recent acquisition of the 3,700 acre Cordelia district, Fairfield's total land area now stands at 16,064 acres. Contained at the center of this expanding city is the 197-acre original grid. The record of Fairfield's origin and historical development is embodied in the streets and buildings of this grid -- the historic heart of Central Fairfield.

CENTRAL FAIRFIELD'S CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Solano County Civic Center: Early History

When the County seat was moved from Benicia to Fairfield in the autumn of 1858, the county offices were housed in a temporary building on Missouri Street. By the spring of 1860, a new two-story brick Court House and two-story brick Jail stood completed on the north side of Texas Street (near the sites of the present buildings but closer to Texas Street), built from the designs of George Bordwell.

Eighteen years later, in 1878, a two-story Hall of Records was erected twenty feet west of the Court House. Bordwell was again the architect. The new building was joined to the Court House by a steel bridge on the second floor.

A major addition and remodeling occurred in the summer of 1887, from the plans of J. M. Curtis. The bridge was replaced by a two-story addition built between, and contiguous to, the 1860 Court House and the 1878 Hall of Records. The two existing buildings were remodeled to harmonize with this new addition. The result was a rather odd composition that looked in fact like three buildings joined together. The Jail remained a separate building.

By 1905, the mongrel 1887 Court House and the 1860 Jail were considered inadequate. The October 2, 1905, Minutes of the Board of Supervisors contain the following Resolution:

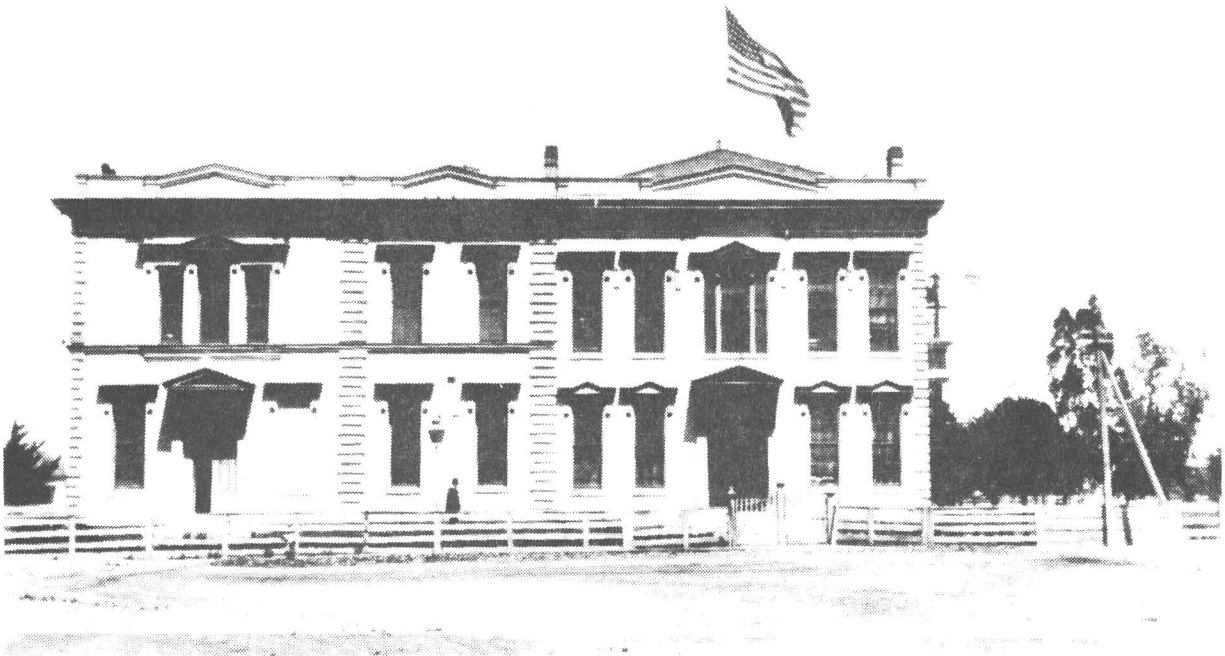
"Whereas, the present Court House and Jail have been in constant use for almost fifty years, and whereas it was found necessary in past years as the County grew and its public business increased, to add to said Court House from time to time...and whereas, on account of the age and weakness of said present Court House and Jail, it would be a waste of public money to repair or add to the same...now therefore the Board of Supervisors of the County of Solano, duly qualified, does hereby and by this resolution determine that the public interest and public welfare demand, and that it is necessary, to erect and furnish said Court House and Jail at Fairfield..."

On November 6, 1905, the Supervisors ordered a special election in Solano County for a \$250,000 bond issue "...to pay the cost of erecting a Court House and Jail...." On December 12, the election was held. The bond issue failed to pass.

Undaunted, the Board of Supervisors passed another resolution on March 5, 1906, calling for the construction of "a suitable County Jail at Fairfield...." Apparently sufficient funds existed in the County coffers to build a jail alone, without the



The Court House, with the 1878 Hall of Records on the left, connected by the elevated steel corridor, c. 1880. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



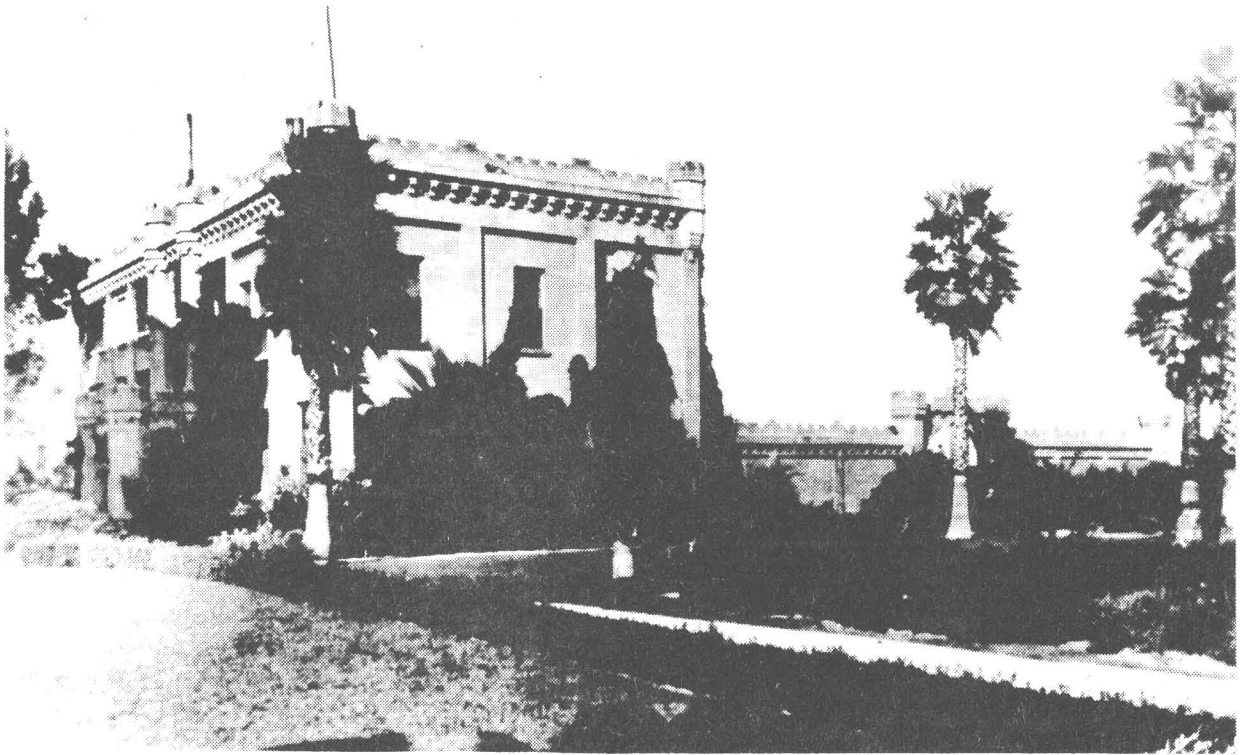
The Court House as it appeared after its 1887 remodeling, c. 1900. The 1860 Court House and the 1878 Hall of Records have been joined to form one building. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

necessity of bonds. On April 2, 1906, the Board of Supervisors hired W. A. Jones of Vallejo "to prepare and submit plans and specifications for a new County Jail..." On May 7, Jones presented a preliminary floor plan to the Board of Supervisors and at that time inquired as to the board's preference regarding materials. He was told to employ a steel and concrete-block structural system. On June 11, 1906, Jones presented plans and specifications for a steel and concrete-block jail; they were promptly approved and accepted by the Board of Supervisors. On September 4, a \$35,136.00 building contract was awarded to W. M. Concannon of Oakland. The \$18,000 cell work contract went to the Pauley Jail Building Company of St. Louis.

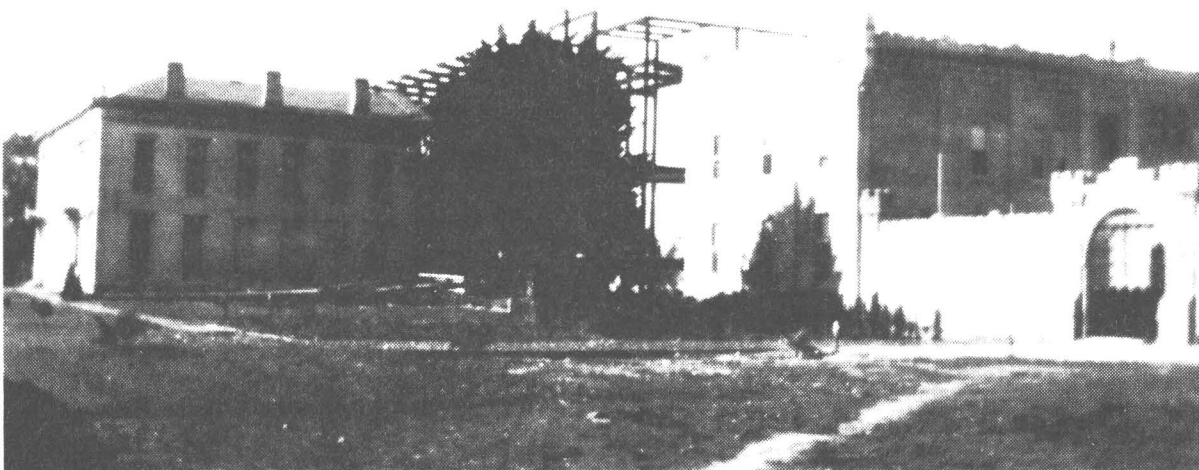
However, the Grand Jury of Solano County, finding the plans and specifications inadequate, requested the Board of Supervisors to defer action upon the contracts while it investigated the matter. The Grand Jury appointed a committee, chaired by Morris Kind, superintendent of the Pacific Portland Cement Company plant in Cement, to study and, if necessary, revise the plans and specifications. Kind suggested that reinforced concrete replace steel frame and concrete blocks as the structural system and eliminated certain unspecified "extras" from the plans. These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 1, 1906. On October 8, Edwin T. Kerr of Vallejo was appointed as supervising inspector of construction of the jail. Kerr, an architect who had designed residences in Suisun City and Fairfield, was later occasionally confused with W. A. Jones as the architect of the County Jail.

The revised plans and specifications, presumably retaining the spirit of Jones' original design, were adopted by the Solano County Board of Supervisors on December 17, 1906. Work proceeded slowly through 1907. On February 3, 1908, construction of the building was completed. Over the next five months the cells were installed. Finally, on July 6, 1908, the new Solano County Jail was declared completed by the Board of Supervisors. It had cost over \$75,000. The Solano Republican reported that "It is said to be one of the best equipped and most substantial jail buildings in the State." The prisoners were transferred to their new home. The following month, the dilapidated 1860 Jail, located between the new Jail and Texas Street, was demolished by its former inmates.

The new Solano County Jail was a gothic fantasy rendered in reinforced concrete. It had the appearance of a medieval fortified castle or dungeon, its fortress-like walls surmounted by corbelled turrets, a crenelated parapet, and a projecting cornice suggestive of machicolation. The turrets and cornice were galvanized iron, very skillfully blended with the concrete walls. Soon after the original construction a wall was built



The Solano County Jail, as it appeared in 1928. This 1908 Gothic fantasy, set in its lush grounds, was altered beyond recognition at the close of World War II. Its remodeling heralded new developments in the Solano County Civic Center. Photograph courtesy of the Solano County Sheriff's Department.



The Solano County Court House under construction, 1911. The steel skeleton of the new Court House rises behind the 1887 Court House. The buildings were so close to each other that the old Court House had to be demolished before the stairs of the new one could be constructed. Note the wall connected to the east side of the Jail; this did not appear in earlier views of the building (see, for example, the views looking north on Union Avenue, c. 1908-1910) and was probably added in 1910 or early 1911. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



The Solano County Court House, looking north on Union Avenue, 1977. Note how well the palm trees reflect the forms of the Ionic colonnade. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

adjoining the Jail to the east, enclosing a prison yard. It, too, featured turrets and crenelation, and appeared integral to the original building.

The Solano County Court House

The Grand Jury of Solano County, in its 1907 year-end recommendations, had considered "the present Court House a disgrace to Solano County, as it is both unsafe and unsightly..."

Now, with the handsome new Jail next door, the inadequacies of the old Court House were brought into sharper focus. The Solano Republican editorialized on the Court House in its January 15, 1909, issue:

"It is entirely too small for the County's business and besides being in a dilapidated and unsafe condition no additions or repairs should be made to it...The County is in need of a new Court House and being out of debt steps should be taken to provide what is necessary and fitting for the public."

In the early months of 1909, the Board of Supervisors began seriously to investigate the possibility of building a new Court House. In April, the members of the Board (accompanied by County Surveyor F. A. Steiger and W. A. Jones, architect of the new Jail) visited several county seats in northern California to inspect modern Court House designs. The ideas gleaned from these trips were presented by Steiger in "...a preliminary sketch showing the arrangement of rooms and floor space for the proposed new Court House..." at the May 18 meeting of the Board of Supervisors. This was to be the basis for the plans submitted by architects in a limited competition. At the same meeting, the following architects were named by the Supervisors to prepare plans: W. A. Jones; A. C. Lutgens; J. W. Dolliver; J. C. Cuthbertson & E. T. Kerr; and G. C. Sellon & E. C. Hemmings.

Plans were prepared and presented by the competing architects at an all-day session with the Board of Supervisors on July 19, 1909. The Supervisors, unable to choose a design, instead decided to call a bond election, and to defer any decision on the design until after the election. The \$250,000 bond election held on September 18, 1909, was passed by the voters. It was a triumph for the Board of Supervisors, a reversal of the 1905 bond election defeat. The Solano Republican, which had boosted the bonds with the headline "Solano County Needs New Court House" the day before the election, exulted over the outcome in its September 25 issue:

"The voters of Solano County decided last Saturday by a safe majority that the County is important enough and wealthy enough to have a new Court House...."

By a process that is not entirely clear from the Supervisor's minutes or from the newspaper accounts, the Board of Supervisors, at their December 20, 1909, meeting, employed W. A. Jones and E. C. Hemmings, two of the competitors, as associate architects of the proposed new Court House. Plans were presented initially on May 2, 1910. On June 20, 1910, the Thompson-Starrett Company was hired as the contractor. After numerous revisions in the plans, the cornerstone was finally laid on March 6, 1911, in a ceremony held in pouring rain.

Eight months later, on November 1, 1911, County employees and officials began moving into the "dandy quarter-of-a-million dollar structure," as the newspaper termed it. To expedite matters, a section of the rear wall of the old Court House was removed and a wooden bridge suspended between the upper stories of the two buildings. Over this suspension bridge everything on the upper floor of the old building was removed. So close was the old Court House to the new one that it had to be demolished before the new granite front steps could be built. The newspaper remarked, somewhat wistfully, that "no ceremony of any kind marked the occupancy of the big building." On December 4, the Board of Supervisors formally accepted the new Solano County Court House from the Thompson-Starrett Company.

With the new Court House completed, the Board of Supervisors, at their March 4, 1912, meeting, proceeded to hire P. B. Estrada "at \$150.00 per month to lay out the Court House grounds." A year earlier, The Solano Republican had reported that the Board of Supervisors would:

"...spend a considerable sum in converting the grounds about the big new building into one of the finest parks to be found in any small town in the State...With Texas Street improved, cement walks laid in front of the square and park beautified, the square will be a very presentable show place for the growing city of Fairfield."

When the Board of Supervisors, on April 7, 1913, directed "to have all the wooden fences removed surrounding the Court House property," the landscaping of the grounds, including the creation of a park to the west of one Court House, presumably was complete. From the 1905 Resolution of the Board of Supervisors calling for a new "Court House and Jail," to the removal of the wooden fences in 1913, a great public work had been executed by Solano County. Two beautiful buildings had been financed and erected, and a park created, in the span of eight years. Of this ensemble, only the Court House has survived intact.

The architects of record associated in the design of the Solano County Court House -- E. C. Hemmings of Sacramento and W. A. Jones of Vallejo -- had not previously collaborated, and both returned to their individual practices after the commission.

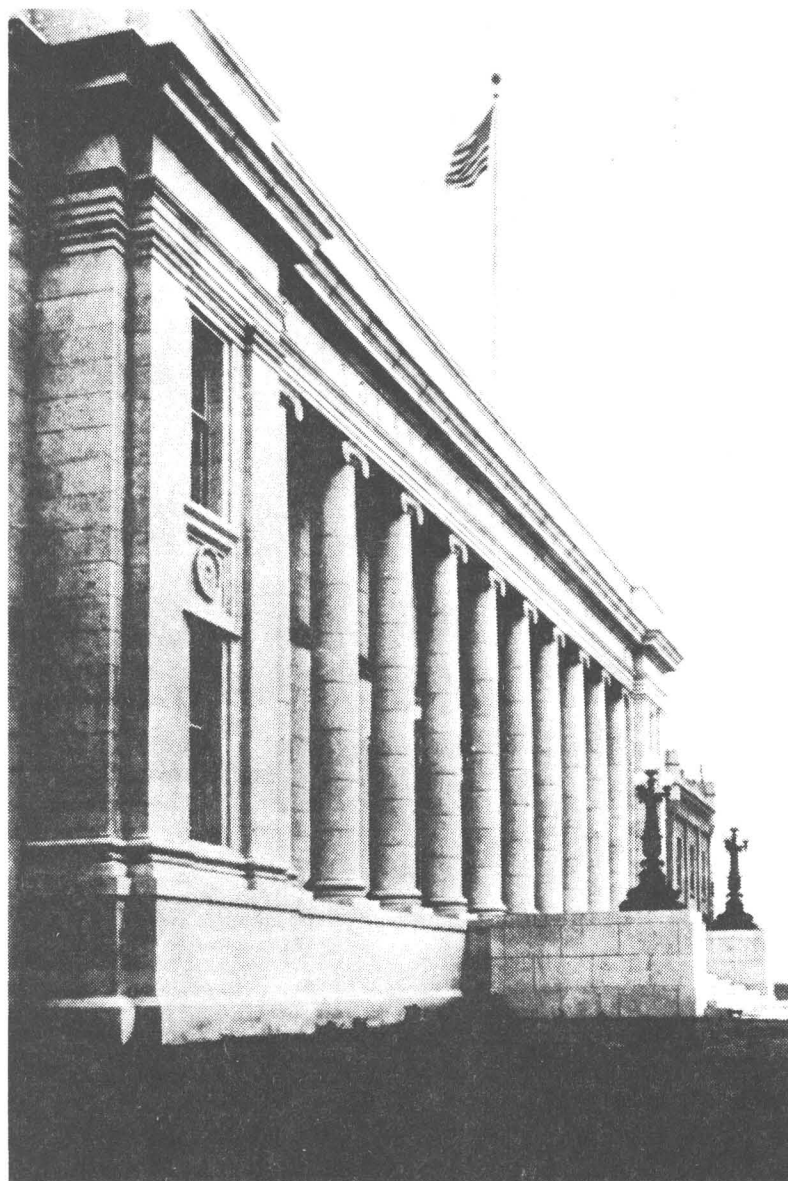
Edward Charles Hemmings was born in 1878. He received his early training in Chicago and for a time practiced architecture in San Francisco. In 1907, he went to Sacramento where for several years he was associated with George C. Sellon, the State Architect. The firm of Sellon & Hemmings went into private practice around 1908. In that year they designed one of the early landmarks of downtown Sacramento. The Hotel Sacramento, now demolished, was a six-story reinforced concrete building at the corner of Tenth and "K" Streets. Constructed by the celebrated Ransome Concrete Company, it was completed in early 1910. It was distinguished by a roof garden, with tile-covered pergolas and gabled belvederes -- like bungalows lifted off a suburban street -- set at the corners. Its inventive design and ambitious use of reinforced concrete made it a well-known building in California.

The firm of Sellon & Hemmings submitted drawings in the spring of 1909 for the Solano County Court House competition; only Hemmings went on to design the Court House, in association with W. A. Jones. A retrospective on the work of E. C. Hemmings in the October, 1917, Architect and Engineer, termed the Court House "...one of his best works...a fine example of the pure Classic."

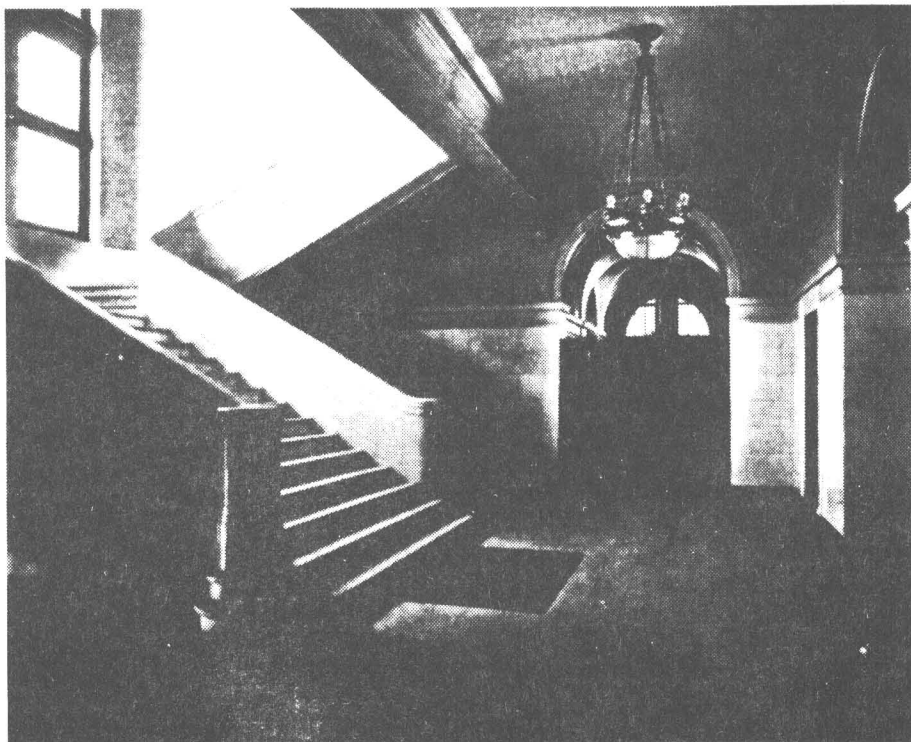
Hemmings went into practice by himself after the Solano County Court House. Some of his more notable buildings in Sacramento from this period were the Chamber of Commerce Building, a Wrightian design revealing his Chicago training; the Y.M.C.A. Building; and the Pacific Gas and Electric Building. The last, built in 1912, is the only one of these to have survived, at 1100 "K" Street.

In 1923, E. C. Hemmings formed a partnership with Leonard F. Starks, an architect who came to Sacramento from New York City in 1921. The firm of Hemmings & Starks designed several buildings in Sacramento, most notably the First Congregational Church and the 14-story Elks Club Building, present day landmarks. Edward C. Hemmings was 46 years old when he died in Sacramento after a 6-month illness. An obituary that appeared in the magazine Architect and Engineer the following month called him "...one of the best known architects in Northern and Central California..."

William Alexander Jones was an architect prominent in Vallejo, where he grew up and spent most of his working life. He was born in Eagleville, Vermont, on September 25, 1859, of an Irish immigrant father and a German immigrant mother. His family moved to Vallejo in 1872, where his father found employment in the Navy Yard at Mare Island, eventually becoming foreman of the modeling shop. William A. Jones learned the carriage-maker's trade as a young man, but he soon turned to architecture, which he studied in San Francisco at the Art Institute. Beginning around 1888, he worked in the offices of H. P. Merritt and Clinton Day in San Francisco.



This view of the 1911 Court House appeared in an article on the work of E. C. Hemmings in the October, 1917 Architect and Engineer, probably taken soon after the building was completed. "The main facade of this building is beautified by a series of Ionic columns," stated the magazine, "which give it a monumental feeling and at the same time is suggestive of a public edifice."



The first floor hall and staircase, as they appeared soon after the Court House was completed in 1911. The interior appears virtually the same today. Photograph from the Architect and Engineer, October, 1917.

Jones returned to Vallejo in the 1890s. Following his father's footsteps, he worked at the Mare Island Navy Yard, where in 1898 he became Chief Draftsman in the Public Works Division. In 1906, Jones set up an architectural practice in Reno, which had been enjoying a boom economy since 1900 as a result of new mining discoveries in the State of Nevada. Returning to Vallejo about two years later, he established a thriving practice which he ran until his retirement in 1933. Along with Charles Perry, Jones was Vallejo's leading architect through the 1920s. Among the buildings in Vallejo designed by his firm were the Empress Theater, the Elks Club on Sacramento Street (now demolished), and the Pennycook and Halliday Houses. William A. Jones was the designer of the 1908 Solano County Jail in Fairfield and was the associate architect with E. C. Hemmings of the 1911 Solano County Court House. He died in Vallejo on July 5, 1939.

The Solano County Court House is a large, two-story civic building with an L-plan and flat roof. Of steel-frame construction with concrete slab floors, its exterior is finished in Raymond granite of a silvery greyish-white hue. The front facade is distinguished by a long Ionic colonade enframed by narrow end pavilions and a simple entablature. Rectangular double-hung windows are regularly spaced in the portico and end pavilions. A broad granite stairway leads to the portico with its central entrance and three doorways. Elaborate iron lamps on pedestals, painted white, flank the staircase.

The interior is largely intact, with lobby, staircase, and corridors finished in a lustrous white marble. Hollow metal trim, employed as molding around doorways and along walls, has been painted flat black and gold. Light fixtures appear original. An arched motif is used throughout, most prominently in the round arched openings to the groin-vaulted corridors; this motif is accentuated in an interior arcade along the stairwell on the second floor. The present Planning Department offices and the Supervisors' Chambers on the second floor have been altered only slightly. Some bathrooms retain original marble wainscoting and partitions.

Set in well-manicured grounds, the Solano County Court House is situated prominently at the end of palm-lined Union Avenue, on the north side of Texas Street. It is flanked by two other County buildings: the remodeled Solano County Jail (1907-1908; 1945-46; 1964) on the east, and the Solano County Office Building (1948-49) on the west. Across Texas Street, on the southwest corner with Union Avenue, is the former Solano County Free Library and Office Building (1931), now used for a variety of county offices. On the east side of Union Avenue is the Solano County Hall of Justice, in the remodeled Neo-classical Armijo Union High School (1913-14; 1970). Armijo Auditorium was added



The Solano County Court House, looking north on Union Avenue, 1977. The urbanistic siting of the 1911 Court House at the head of Union Avenue, framed by palm trees, is evident here. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

to the north end of the school in 1930. A 1976 addition, known as "Hall of Justice II," houses various County offices, and is attached to the south end of the old high school building. Together these buildings create a strong sense of place. They convey the distinct image of a governmental civic center, even though some of them have been severely altered.

The County Water Tower

Until 1932, when the County buildings in Fairfield began to be serviced by the Town of Fairfield's newly refurbished water works, the Court House and Jail had relied upon their own well and tank. Photographs of the Court House grounds from c. 1908-1910 show an old elevated wooden water tank between the Jail and the old Court House. The tank was relocated, either closer to Empire Street or across Texas Street on county property, when the new Court House was constructed in 1911.

The County Supervisor's Minutes of December 2, 1918 read as follows: "Ordered...that the County Engineer be directed to prepare plans and specifications for a new water tank and tower for [the] Court House yard." The Minutes for February 3, 1919 note that the Supervisors adopted "...the plans and specifications as prepared by the County Engineer for a reinforced concrete water tank and tower for the Court House yard..." These plans, dated January 1919, show a 50 foot octagonal tower with crenelated parapet, and are signed "F. A. Steiger, County Surveyor." On March 3, Olof Olson was awarded the contract to build the tower with a low bid of \$2,264.00. The work was completed the following fall; the old water tank and equipment were dismantled and sold in November, 1919.

As a result of the successful \$48,000.00 bond election in May, 1931, the Town of Fairfield was able to overhaul its water system. This included the sinking of a new deep well and the construction of a large steel water tower. The Minutes of June 29, 1932, noted that the Board of Supervisors "...ordered... that the Town of Fairfield be given the privilege for furnishing water for the Court House, Jail and Library...." Presumably, at this time the use of the County Water Tower was discontinued. In recent years the old County Water Tower has been used for storage by the Buildings and Grounds Division of the Solano County Public Works Department.

Frank Alexander Steiger, the designer of the old County Water Tower, was born in San Francisco in 1864 and raised on a Vacaville ranch. His father, before taking up fruit farming, was a respected machinist who specialized in the installation of mining equipment and water systems. He encouraged his son to take up the machinist's trade. The younger Steiger, however, was interested in civil engineering. After working as a surveyor for E. N. Eager (later to be Solano County Surveyor and

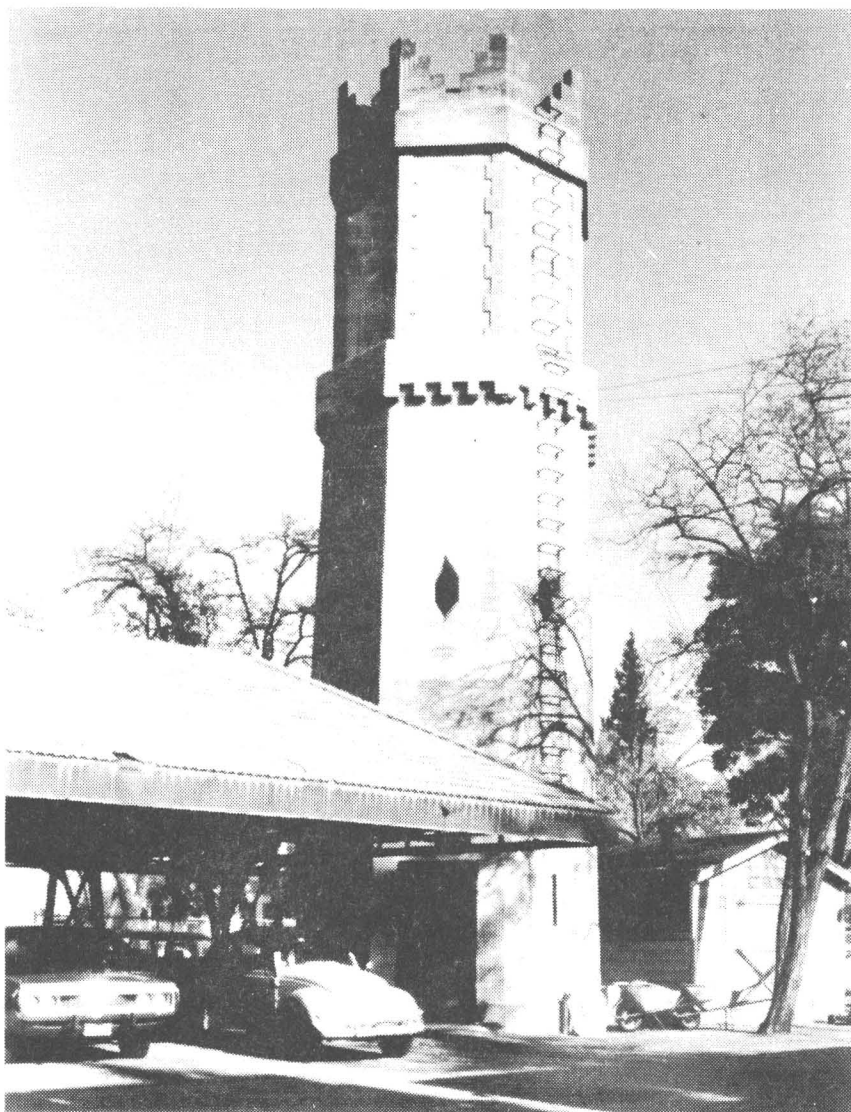
Engineer) around 1884, he entered the University of Michigan, where he received a degree in civil engineering. After working in Denver and Chicago, he returned to Solano County in 1891 as a specialist in roads and bridges, working concurrently as the town engineer of Vacaville and Rio Vista, and City Engineer of Benicia. In 1898, he was elected to the office of Solano County Surveyor, a position which he held until 1910, when he entered private practice (while still keeping his county and municipal ties). In 1918, Steiger was re-elected County Surveyor, and held this office until 1942, his retirement following a year later.

F. A. Steiger's name appeared on almost every public concrete structure and bridge in Solano County during his more than fifty years involvement with the County government. Reinforced concrete was his preferred method of construction. Among the bridges he designed, or helped design, were the 1908 Yolo-Solano Bridge over Putah Creek in Winters, which The Solano Republican called "...the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi"; the Suisun Valley Creek Bridge in 1910; and two bridges over Ulatis Creek in Vacaville in 1911. He designed the eccentric reinforced concrete Town Hall and Jail in Vacaville in 1906, was intimately involved in the planning of the new Solano County Court House in 1909 (producing the preliminary floor plans used as a guideline in the design competition), and designed the water tower for the Court House grounds in January, 1919. Frank Steiger's father died on December 12, 1918, as Steiger was beginning to design the water tower. Perhaps the tower became in part a memorial to his father, the machinist who had built a reputation on building water works.

When F. A. Steiger died at the age of 79 on January 14, 1944, the Vallejo Times-Herald praised him as "an able, honest and conscientious County official...The imprint of his memory will linger in the years to come and will serve as a pattern for other County officials to emulate..." All County offices closed their doors during the afternoon of January 17 while County employees attended his funeral.

The Old County Water Tower is a tapering octagonal structure fifty feet high, built totally of reinforced concrete. The tower is crowned by stepped parapets that reflected the crene-lation of the old jail. The walls are articulated by a string course suggestive of machicolation surmounted by slightly recessed panels framed in simulated quoining.

An elongated diamond-shaped opening pierces each wall approximately half-way up, with a vertical slit opening at ground level. A reinforced concrete door with metal lattice opening is set in the west wall with a quoin-like surround. Metal rungs on one side provide access to the roof. The unused water tank is located in the top third of the tower. The bottom two-



The Old County Water Tower, 1977. A monument to County Surveyor Frank A. Steiger, its designer, and to the vanished Gothic Jail of 1908, its inspiration. This structure was in a tradition of reinforced concrete construction in Solano County when it was erected in 1919. The parking shed constructed in 1929 by the Judson Steel Company, reinforces the verticality of the tower. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

thirds of the interior of the structure is a hollow shell presently used for storage. Although not used as a water tower for fifty years, the structure appears completely intact.

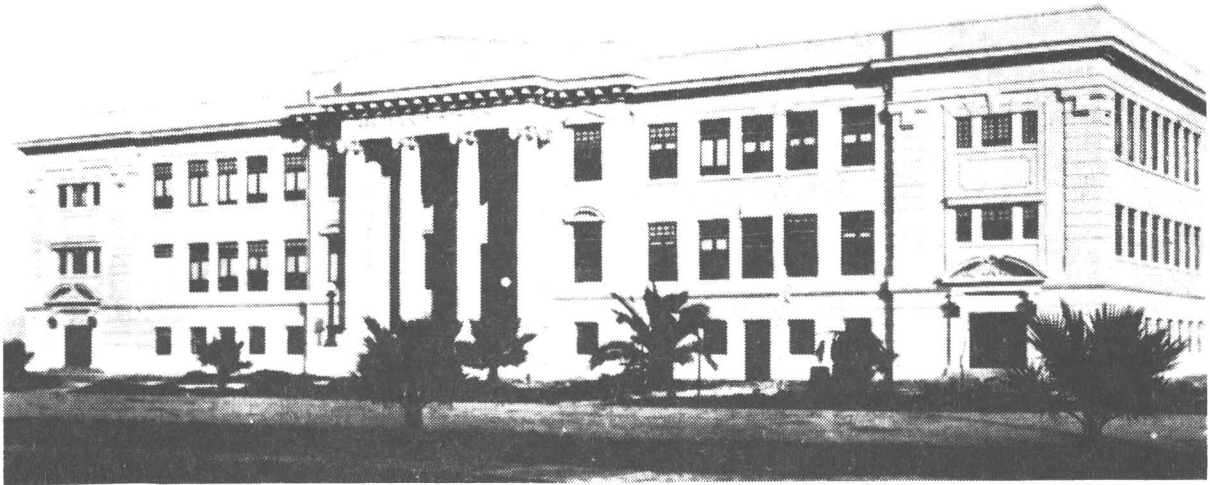
The original grouping of County Jail (1907-08) and Court House (1911) was enhanced by the addition of the Water Tower in 1919. The Tower, as already mentioned, was designed to harmonize with the fanciful dungeon-like Jail, and was an extremely successful design on its own terms. It is ironic that subsequent remodelings and additions to the Jail have left the Water Tower virtually the sole survivor of the original fantastic scheme. It is doubly ironic that the Old County Water Tower survived the structure which superseded it in 1932. The Fairfield Water Works Tower was dismantled in 1981.

The Solano County Civic Center: Other Developments, 1920-1930

Over the next quarter of a century this ensemble on the Court House Square was to survive intact. Changes, whether small or large, were sensitive to the existing buildings and grounds, and enhanced, rather than negated, their visual qualities. A memorial to the Solano County soldiers who lost their lives in the war, located in front of the Court House steps, was unveiled in a solemn ceremony on January 5, 1920. It is a bronze statue approximately twelve feet high, of a winged woman, or angel, mounted on a pedestal inscribed with the names of the dead. During 1924, the grounds were relandscaped according to the plans of the McRorrie and McLaren Company of San Francisco. It is not certain what they in fact did to the grounds, or how much remains.

Even in a matter as prosaic as the parking of automobiles, design was carefully considered. On July 1, 1929, the Board of Supervisors awarded the Judson Pacific Company, on a low bid of \$1,450.00, the contract for the "furnishing and installation of structural steel trusses for the County garage." What resulted was a parking shed featuring a light steel frame cantilevered out from central supports, surmounted by a handsome hip roof formed of corrugated metal laid in overlapping strips. Erected immediately to the west of the Water Tower, almost touching it, the low, rakish carport and the jutting tower formed an intriguing composition.

Of the two County blocks south of Texas Street, the one east of Union Street had been sold to the Armijo Union High School District in 1893, and the first Armijo Union High School -- a rambling Queen Anne building -- had been constructed on that site during the 1893-94 school year. In 1913, following a \$70,000 school bond election, a new Armijo Union High School had been constructed on the site of the old building. Designed by the talented San Francisco architect, Henry C. Smith, this large building, completed in 1914, was a fine example of the Neo-



The new Armijo Union High School, 1914. This Neo-Classical Revival building was a strong contributor to the Solano County Civic Center before massive alterations and additions compromised its architectural integrity. In 1970, it was remodeled as the Solano County Hall of Justice. Window openings were closed, a sprayed concrete finish applied and anodized aluminum screens attached to the facade. A modern south wing was added in 1976. Photograph from the Architect and Engineer, January, 1916.



Armijo Auditorium, c. 1977. Considered alone, the Armijo Auditorium is a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture. But its significance has been compromised by its deteriorated condition, awkward siting and somewhat crude joining to the Solano County Hall of Justice (not apparent in this view). Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

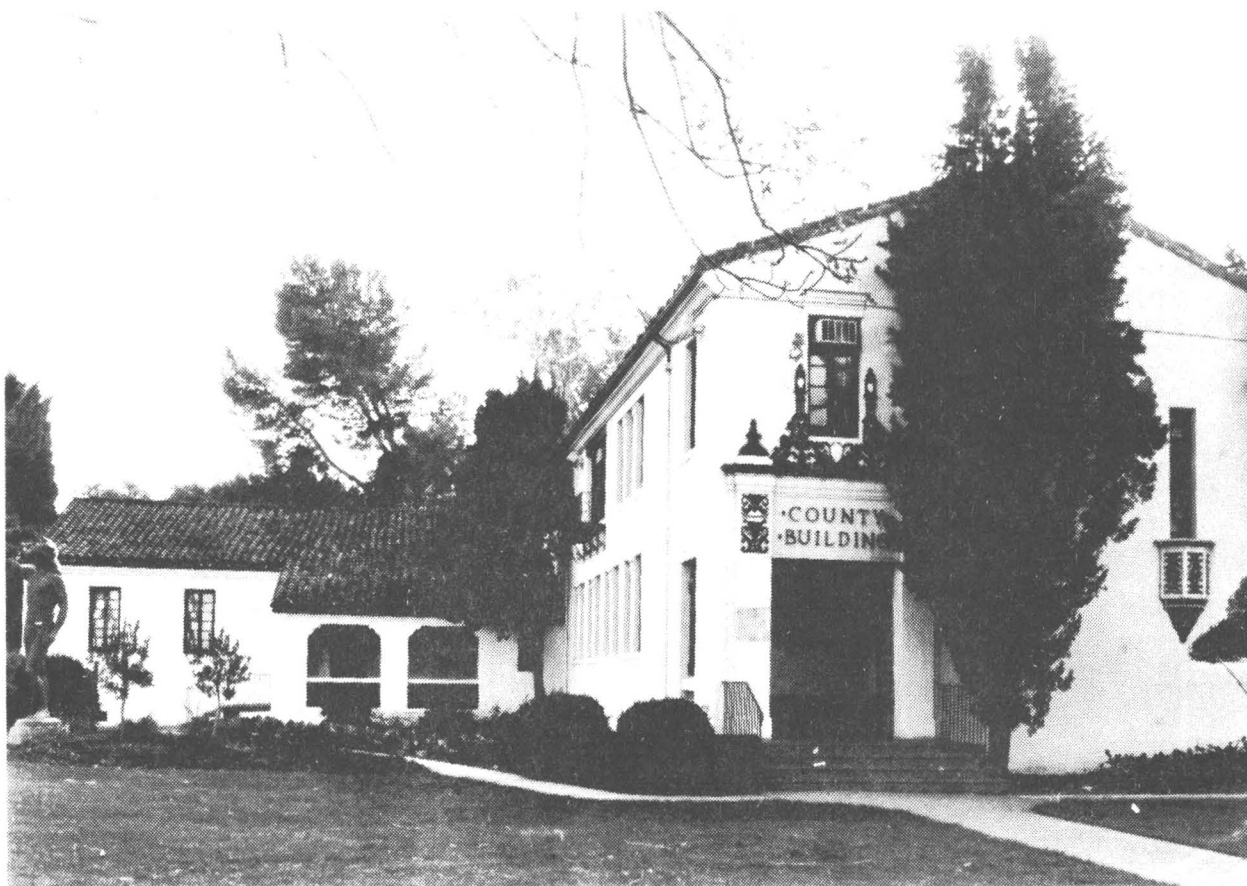
Classical Revival, set in a block of landscaped grounds. The symmetrical composition had a central columned portico and slightly projecting end pavilions. Details included a rusticated base and projecting cornice with dentils and brackets over the entrance. In design and scale, it was a perfect complement to the newly completed Solano County Court House, and generally to the landscaped ensemble across Texas Street. The Armjio Auditorium, a 1930 addition to the high school designed by W. E. Coffman, was in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. A low-pitched, red-tiled hip roof covered the hall, the rear stage wing and the one-story entrance wing. Classical pilasters and a simple entablature were imprinted into the reinforced concrete. The Auditorium, though somewhat crudely joined to the older high school building, was a fine work of architecture. It was a strong contributor to the landscaped ensemble of civic and governmental buildings that was evolving at the intersection of Texas Street and Union Avenue.

The Solano County Free Library and Office Building

The County block west of Union Street and south of Texas Street had remained in County ownership. A variety of small private buildings on leased lots had been built on the block, for the most part along Texas Street. With the new County Library in the planning stage, the Board of Supervisors moved first to clear the site. The Minutes of September 2, 1930 read, "Ordered...that the Clerk be directed to notify the owners of all office buildings located on the County block in Fairfield, bounded by Texas and Missouri Streets, and Union Avenue, and Webster Street, to remove said buildings from said block within the next thirty days." At their September 29 meeting, the Supervisors hired the firm of Coffman, Sahlberg & Stafford, the Sacramento firm which had designed the Armijo Auditorium, to design the new Solano County Free Library and Office Building. Completed in 1931, this handsome building in the Spanish Colonial Revival style consisted of red tile gable-roofed wings, with a shed-roofed porch leading to the library entry at the junction of the wings. Ornamentation included tile work, pierced grilles and a plaster relief surrounding the building entrance. A dignified bronze statue of Chief Solano, by sculptor William Gordon Huff, was added in 1934. It graced a carefully landscaped site which included a lawn, flower gardens, shrubs, eucalyptus and evergreen trees.

The Solano County Civic Center: Recent History, 1945-1976

The Solano County Jail was remodeled and enlarged in 1945 and 1946. The fanciful corbelled turrets and crenelated parapets of the 1907-1908 jail were stripped away; the crenelated and turretted wall around the prison yard was demolished to make room for the jail's new east wing. The new wing and the remodeled old jail were designed in the same uninspired function-



The Solano County Free Library and Office Building, 1977. This pleasing building in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style completed in 1931 was the last major addition to the Solano County Civic Center before World War II. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

al style. The landscaped garden in front was removed. What remains today of this medieval fantasy is the partially intact west portal.

Harry J. Devine, the Sacramento architect who had remodeled and altered the Jail, was retained by the Board of Supervisors to design a new office building for the County. Constructed in 1948-49, the 2-story Solano County Office Building replaced the 1912-13 landscaped park west of the Court House. Its prosaic design added less to the County complex than it took away. Its impact, in conjunction with the jail remodeling, was highly damaging to the historic integrity of the County ensemble. Its mass and setback, at least, respected the Court House.

Old Armijo Union High School was refitted as the Solano County Hall of Justice in 1970. The massive remodeling resulted in a gutting of the building and a moderately heavy alteration of the exterior. This included filling in window openings, the application of a sprayed concrete finish, and, most obtrusively, the addition of anodized aluminum windows and screens. A modern south wing, known as Hall of Justice II, was built in 1976.

Armijo Auditorium, vacant since the 1970 remodeling of the old high school, has suffered from vandalism, water damage, and a general lack of maintenance. This neglect and deterioration of an architecturally important building has further compromised the architectural and historical integrity of the Solano County Civic Center.

Most importantly, the 1911 Court House has retained a high degree of original architectural integrity, both on the exterior and interior. The various remodelings over the years have been relatively minor, restricted for the most part to alterations of offices. The 1931 former Library and Office Building is in excellent condition, virtually intact inside and out, and the landscaping has survived. It is being used exclusively for county offices, as the the Solano County Free Library was relocated to the new Fairfield Civic Center in 1972.

The last major component of the ensemble that has survived well are the palm trees lining Union Avenue and Texas Street. Planted around 1908, presumably by the Town of Fairfield, they strongly contribute to the cohesion of the ensemble, and create a memorable vista looking north on Union Avenue to the Court House. Along with Waterman's original donation of land around the intersecting axes of Texas Street and Union Avenue, they are Fairfield's major contribution to the Solano County Civic Center.



This aerial view shows the Solano County Civic Center as it appeared in 1951. The Jail has been remodeled, and the Solano County Office Building, newly completed, stands to the west of the Court House. The library, on its landscaped lot, relates both to the county buildings across Texas Street and to the high school across Union Avenue. Note the mature palm trees. Photograph courtesy of the Solano County Treasurer's Office.

OTHER BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

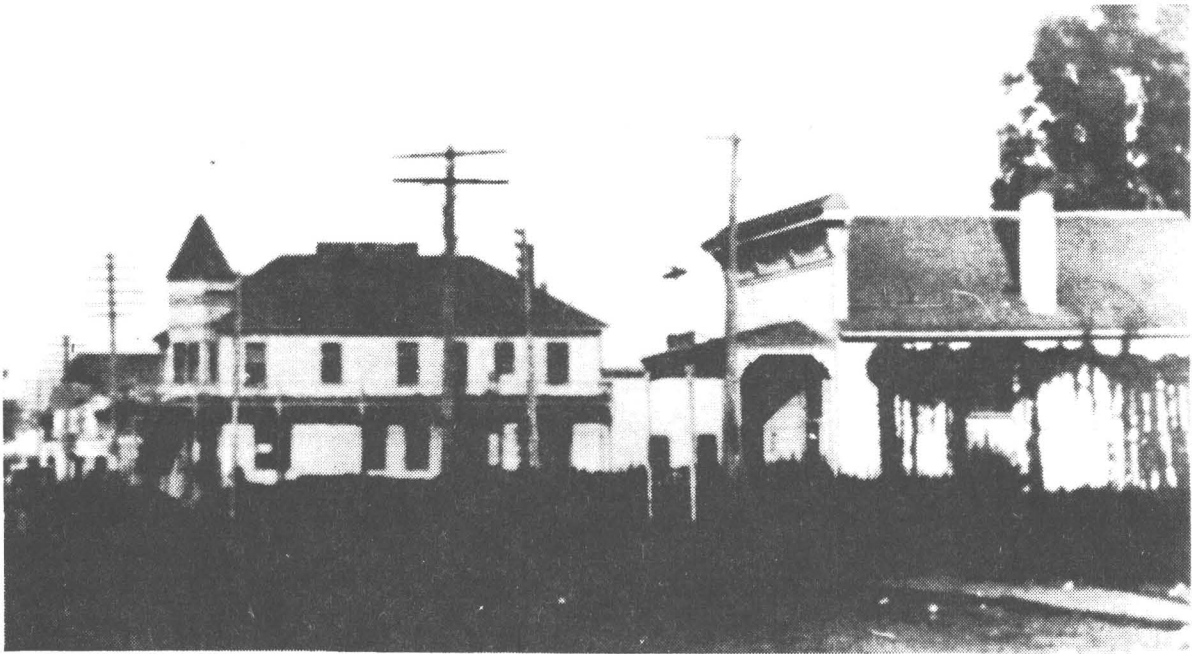
The 748 Broadway Building

The small scale of the Italianate house at the northeast corner of Broadway and Webster Street (748 Broadway) is characteristic of Fairfield in the 19th century, when it lacked the wealth and prestige of neighboring Suisun City. Residences in Fairfield prior to its incorporation in 1903 were typically simple frame dwellings with a minimum of decoration. Accordingly, the rich detailing on the house at 748 Broadway is quite unusual for Fairfield residences of this period.

This building has been confused continually with the old Post Office once located on the Court House Square (see, for example, Our Lasting Heritage, page 63). Recent investigation since the 1977 survey published in Our Lasting Heritage suggests that the building at 748 Broadway is not, in fact, the Old Post Office. Existing photographs of the old Post Office in its original location on the Court House Square show a building that is nearly identical to the 748 Broadway Building, including a very similar porch addition. This remarkable similarity between the two buildings could possibly be explained as being the work of the same builder, as coming from the same pattern book, or as mimicry.

In the busy years following the 1903 incorporation, a number of buildings were moved from the vicinity of the Court House Square and from Texas Street, focus of the expanding commercial center. According to local tradition, the house at 748 Broadway originally was located at 720 Webster Street, three and one-half blocks to the north, and moved to its present site around 1915 by Tony Lewis, a prominent fruit farmer. Lewis lived in the house next door and rented the small Italianate house as income property. The nearly identical porches on the two Broadway houses, and their proximity on a common lot, indicate this early common ownership. The old Post Office, also according to local tradition, was moved from the Court House Square to the site of the present Food Fair, where it served as a hamburger place called "The Shack" and where it eventually was demolished.

The surest corroboration that the building at 748 Broadway is not the old Post Office comes from a comparison of the Sanborn map of 1907 and the Minutes of the Supervisors of Solano County. The 1907 Sanborn map shows the building at 748 Broadway in its present location. The Minutes of the County Supervisors for May 1, 1911, read as follows: "Ordered...that the Postmaster at Fairfield be notified to remove the post office building from the Court House grounds as soon as possible, as the building was [sic] in the way of certain contemplated im-



Old Post Office, on the Court House Square, looking west on Texas Street c. 1900. The close resemblance of the 748 Broadway Building to Fairfield's first Post Office is evident, and helps explain the persistent confusion between the two buildings. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



The 748 Broadway Building, 1977. Often confused with the old Fairfield Post Office, this structure was once located on Webster Street off Texas. Unusually stylish for the buildings of its day, it is the unique unaltered example of the Italianate style in Fairfield. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

provements." Therefore, because the small Italianate building at 748 Broadway has been at its present location at least since 1907, and because the old Post Office was not moved from the Court House grounds until 1911, the building at 748 Broadway cannot be the old Post Office.

The building at 748 Broadway is a one-story, wood-frame house sheathed in channel rustic wood siding. It has a rectangular shotgun plan and low-pitched gable roof. The building is distinguished by a false-front Italianate facade, unusually rich in its decorative detailing for a building so small. A mansardic cornice is supported by six scrolled brackets, interspersed with a paneled frieze. The transomed door and single window of the front facade are identically framed with wood surrounds; the segmentally-arched transom and window are surmounted by incised panels and lintels supported by scrolled brackets. A shed-roofed porch supported by turned columns with sawn brackets extends the width of the front of the house, and probably is a later addition, as is the basket-weave railing wall. Side and rear walls are unadorned, with simply framed rectangular double-hung windows, and plain rear door. Successive additions to the rear of the building are delineated by vertical battens.

The original interior, which appears to be a single room, has been altered with the addition of new imitation-wood paneling and trim.

The Goosen House

The Goosen House was built sometime between 1910 and 1912 for Henry Goosen, a prominent entrepreneur of early 20th century Fairfield. Goosen was born in 1860 to German immigrant farmers in Solano County. He ran a successful combination blacksmith shop and hardware store in Cordelia from 1886 to 1907. In 1902, he purchased the City Water Works in Fairfield, and in 1904 opened a general store on Webster Street, off Texas Street. He moved to Fairfield in 1907, and ran both of these successful enterprises for a number of years.

Henry Goosen was a progressive, innovative citizen, hardly surprising for the owner of one of the major utilities in Fairfield. He was quick, for example, to pick up on the new construction technique of reinforced concrete, highly touted for its fireproof capabilities in the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 fire, and recently used to good effect in the Solano County Jail, completed in Fairfield in 1908. Goosen's store and residence nearly had been destroyed in a disastrous fire that burned a whole block of Texas Street in July, 1909. He was away from town at the time of the fire, and only a private well and large pump on his premises saved his combination store and residence. Goosen had a new concrete building con-

structed on Texas Street, which he occupied at the end of 1909.

In 1913 he erected his mansion on the northwest corner of Empire and Madison Streets. According to a nephew, William Gleason, Goosen employed three Scottish builders named McCullum, McDougal and Cameron to build the carefully crafted house. The designer of the house is unknown, though it bears some resemblance to the Harbison House, constructed in 1906 on the site of the future Nut Tree. Goosen's house, in scale and refinement, was unprecedented in Fairfield when it was built and has not been equalled since. At one time, it was known to the local school children as "The Mayor's House," since two of the house's five owners -- the second (Smith) and the fourth (Campos) -- have been Fairfield mayors.

The Goosen House is a two-story, wood-frame Colonial Revival house clad in grey painted shingles with white painted wood trim, situated on a prominent, well-landscaped corner lot. It is of a rectangular, nearly square, plan, and is topped by a hip roof with broad soffitted eaves and carved modillions. A giant tetrastyle front portico with recessed pediment and ionic columns is visually reinforced by giant ionic corner pilasters and identical projecting pediments above the cornice line on the side elevations. A continuous dentil course runs above the frieze, and within each recessed pediment.

The front elevation is symmetrical, the central portico flanked by gently bowed double-hung bay windows on the ground floor, and simply framed double-hung windows on the second floor. Inside the portico, the entrance is distinguished by an Adamesque doorway, with elliptical fan light, framed by delicate ionic columns and pediment. The principal side elevation, on Madison Street, is also symmetrical, and features a central semi-circular flat-roofed porch with ionic columns. Three tall brick chimneys project above the roof-line. Two small rectangular stained glass windows with landscape scenes flank the rear chimney. The exterior is virtually intact. The original slate roof has been replaced with composition roofing, and a carport was added to the rear in 1949.

The twelve-room interior features parquet floors, hardwood wainscoting in some rooms, three ornate fireplaces, coved and coffered ceilings, and a handsome central staircase. The architectural integrity of the interior has been compromised only slightly. The interior wood work has been painted white, and the kitchen underwent a major remodeling c. 1949. The large corner lot has been well maintained, and is covered with a lawn and mature trees.



The Goosen House, 1977. One of the outstanding residential structures in Fairfield, this c. 1910-1912 edifice is a symbol of Fairfield's growing stature in the years between incorporation and the opening of the State Highway. In stylishness and scale, it matched anything built in Suisun City in the 19th century. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

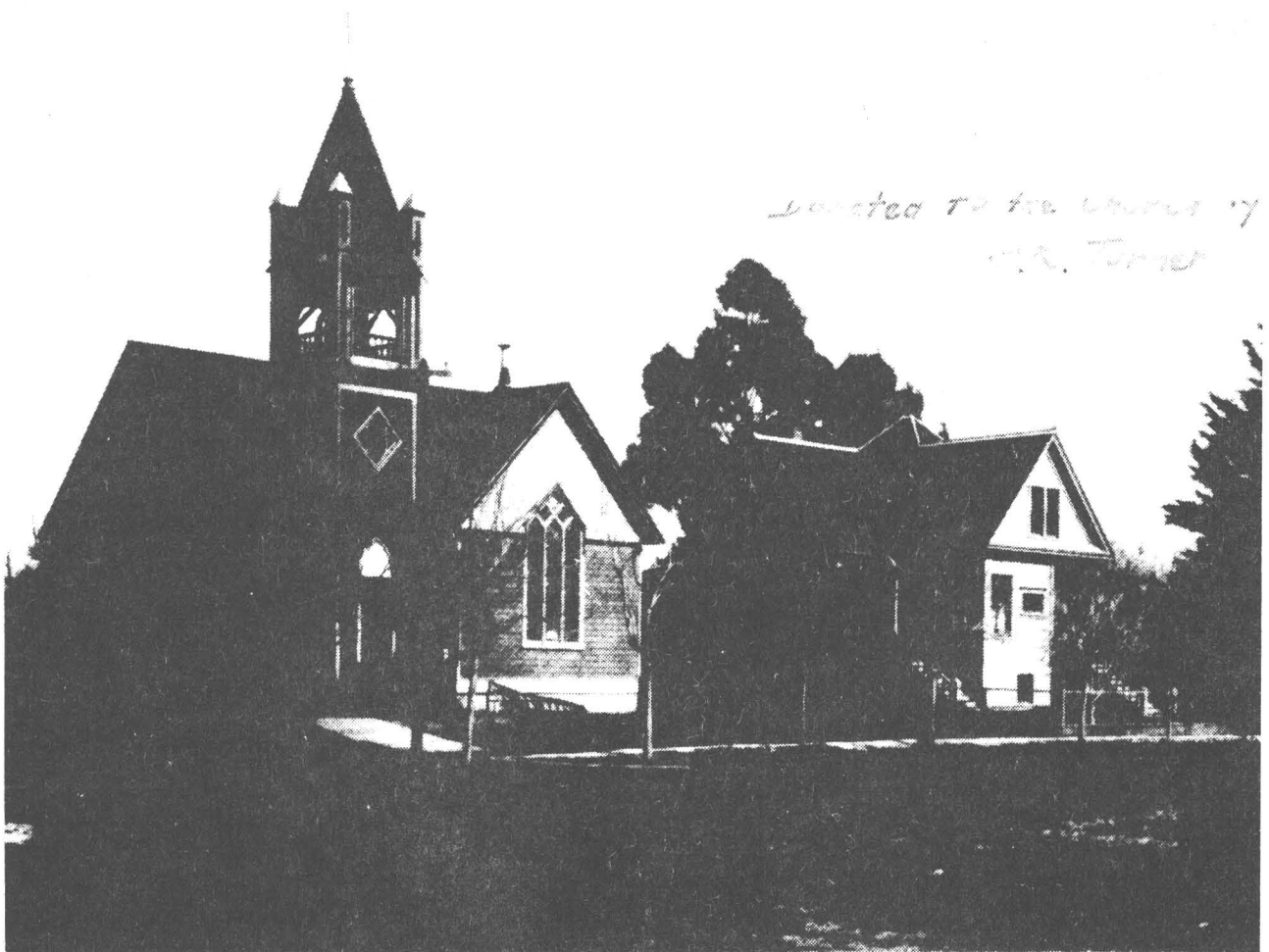
The Old Methodist Church

The Methodist Church established itself in the Fairfield area in 1855, when the first Board of Trustees was appointed. That year, a small building was erected three miles west of the future townsite of Fairfield, and was pastored by circuit riders. It was not until 1857 that a parsonage was built in Fairfield, on the north side of Empire Street near Madison Street. In 1860, a brick church was constructed on the northeast corner of Empire and Madison Streets, next to the parsonage. This church, completed in 1861, was probably the first in the new town of Fairfield. It was rectangular in plan, with gabled roof and a two-story square bell tower containing the entry. The church was one of the major landmarks of Fairfield in its early years. Its flat-topped tower, along with the Court House and, after 1878, the Hall of Records, would have constituted the skyline for travellers approaching the Solano County seat.

The Reverend B. F. Taylor, pastor of the Church from 1883 to 1886, wrote in 1885 that "Both the Church and Parsonage need repairs very much, but the people think they are not able to make them...." An act of God brought about the needed repairs. On April 19, 1892, a violent earthquake, estimated at 6.8 on the Richter scale, shook central California. Felt as far south as Fresno and as far north as Chico, from San Francisco to Nevada, its center was in the region of Solano and Yolo Counties. Vacaville, Dixon, and Winters were severely damaged. The Solano Republican reported heavy damage to the Methodist Church, and light damage to the Court House and Jail in Fairfield. "The brick church was severely handled," the newspaper said. "The top of the bell tower fell in, window shutters were loosened, a portion of the front cornice torn off, and the top portion of the north end wall fell off." The congregation decided to demolish the ruined building and to build a totally new structure on the same site.

On November 9, 1892, the cornerstone was laid, and three months later, on February 12, 1893, the new church was dedicated. It was wood-frame and clad in shingles, its cruciform plan expressed in interlocking gabled wings. The entry was through a square corner bell tower, open above, with pointed finials and steeple-like roof. The building was notable for an overall directness and simplicity in its design, and for a crispness of articulation (exemplified in the sharp geometry of the windows).

In 1900, a new parsonage was erected on the site of the 1857 structure. This one and one-half story, wood-frame house with cross-gabled wings is still being used as a parsonage by the Fairfield Church of God.



Old Methodist Church and Parsonage, c. 1905. This was the wood-frame church which replaced the brick one destroyed in the earthquake of April, 1892. It was substantially remodeled and enlarged in 1917. The house on the right was the parsonage, built in 1900, and "...the most beautiful and commodious residence in town..." Photograph from the cover of a 1957 history of the Methodist Church, courtesy of the Fairfield Church of God.



The Old Methodist Church, 1977. This 1917 reconstruction of the 1893 Church is one of the strongest remaining links with 19th century life in Fairfield. Its prominent corner site, surrounded by mature street trees, across from the Goosen House, makes it one of the principal visual landmarks of Fairfield. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

In 1916 it was decided to enlarge the church. Henry Goosen, whose recently built mansion stood across Madison Street from the church, was one of the members of the building committee. The elaborate reconstruction cost over \$8,000.00, and so complete was the remodeling that the new church dedicated on March 25, 1917, was virtually a new building. All that remained was the basic cross-gabled form with corner bell tower, and the two large stained-glass windows on the south and west walls. The bell tower was fattened, braced with stepped buttresses at the corners, and squared off at the top. Buttresses were placed diagonally at each of the building's corners. The north wing was expanded by the addition of a cross-gabled wing containing a social hall and classrooms. Access to the new wing was provided by a gabled porch entry with heavy timber bracing on Madison Street. The original windows were flanked by small lancet-shaped windows, with similarly shaped vents cut into the top of the tower. Curved blocky brackets were attached to the eaves. All the wall surfaces, including the buttresses, were then sheathed in a new skin of shingles. A 1950 one-story Sunday School addition to the north, executed in the same materials, was sympathetic to the original building. Its Madison Street elevation consists of a low shingled wall pierced by double-hung windows and surmounted by a row of peaked parapets, terminated on the north by a low cross-gabled wing.

The portion of the interior rebuilt in 1917 is virtually intact. Tongue-and-groove fir wainscoting in the front entry hall and sanctuary is original, as are the exposed dark-stained roof beams and trusses. These contrast with the white plaster of the walls and ceilings. Each corner of the sanctuary is accentuated by paired engaged columns with unusual capitals in the form of intertwined oak leaves. The social hall features an elevated stage.

In 1957 or 1958, the Methodist congregation moved to a new building, and sold the old building to the Church of God. The Church of God has occupied the building continuously since then. The Old Methodist Church, seen today, painted dark brown with white trim, is a pleasing California Craftsman version of a Gothic Revival Church. It is situated on a prominent corner parcel complemented by street trees, with the Goosen House across Madison street.

The Fairfield Sign

The 1920s marked a new phase in Fairfield's development, initiated by the routing of the new State Highway along Texas Street in 1915. The concept and appellation of "Twin City" was born in this decade, revealing that Fairfield finally came to regard itself as the equal of Suisun City. Suisun City in its slow decline met Fairfield in its slow ascendance. This shift in

prestige and influence is reflected in the relocation of The Solano Republican from Suisun to Fairfield in 1923, but it is most fully symbolized in the Fairfield Sign. The story of this sign is a fascinating vignette of the period.

In the early years of the decade Fairfield and Suisun City established Community Clubs -- service and social organizations that were offsprings of the Merchants' Associations that had existed in the two towns in the early years of the century, and of the Suisun City Chamber of Commerce, which had flourished for a few years after its founding in the summer of 1913. Their members shared a vision of community betterment, a sort of amalgam of good will, good times, and good business. This spirit is captured, perhaps, in the community picnic sponsored jointly by the clubs in the summer of 1924. Two hundred guests and members attended -- fully ten percent of the combined population of the two towns -- and they danced to the music of Tony Lawrence and the Twin City Orchestra. Among the musicians was Joe Gerevas, Fairfield mayor, on the drums.

In spite of spectacular successes like the picnic, the community clubs were atrophying from a lack of motivated members. At a meeting of the Fairfield Community Club in late July, 1924, the members decided to investigate the possibility of joining the Lions Clubs. The Lions were a service organization similar to (and slightly younger than) Rotary International. The International Association of Lions Clubs had been formed in Chicago in 1917. From a roster of twenty-five clubs at the first convention in Dallas, the organization had grown to more than eight hundred clubs in 1925. High-ranking Lions addressed the Fairfield Community Club at their July 30th meeting. They were told that "A Lion is a man who gives the best that is in him at all times for the benefit of mankind," and that Lionism sought the three qualities of "fun, fellowship and inspiration." The resources of the Lions clubs would ensure that local clubs would not lack programs or entertainment. "Membership in a Lions club is a pledge of public service," wrote David A. Weir, editor of The Solano Republican and member of the Fairfield Community Club, "and whenever the Lions assemble plans are made and executed for the betterment of that community." The Fairfield Lions Club was organized at the July 30th meeting.

In late August, a committee of the Fairfield Community Club met with the Sacramento Lions Club to plan a charter night for the proposed Fairfield den. This same committee also was given the task of producing "...tentative plans and specifications for a concrete or steel sign to be placed at the outskirts of Fairfield." This reference, in the August 28, 1924, edition of The Solano Republican, was the first mention of what was to become the Fairfield Sign. "These plans will then be laid before the Town Board and they will be asked to help finance such a sign,"

explained the newspaper. "It was pointed out that many travellers pass town after town without learning the name of it, and it is proposed that the sign will read 'Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County.' The inspiration for the Fairfield sign thus came out of the Fairfield Community Club in August, 1924, in the midst of its transformation into a Lions Club. Interestingly, one of the members of the three-man committee given the task of coming up with plans for the sign was Howard Goosen, twenty-five year old son of Henry Goosen.

The Fairfield Town Board, in addition to purchasing a new Harley Davidson motorcycle for the Town's Motor-Policeman at its September 2 meeting, allocated a small portion of the Town tax rate "...for the steel arch to be erected at the west entrance of Texas Street..." (Solano Republican, September 4, 1924). The Board reviewed "plans of a proposed street arch designating the name of 'Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County' at a cost of approximately \$980.00" at its November 18th meeting. An illustration of the sign, portraying a sign somewhat more grandiose and awkward-looking than the sign eventually erected, appeared on the front page of the December 11, 1924, Solano Republican. It consisted of two joined signs: one, a fifty-foot wide arch with the word "Fairfield" in letters two feet high, and, suspended from this, a stepped rectangular sign bearing the words "County Seat of Solano County" in ten-inch letters. This was to have been hung on stuccoed poles thirty feet high and "...illuminated so that it will be visible for eight to ten miles."

Despite the Town Board's receptivity and quick action on the sign -- perhaps explained by the fact that three of the Board's five members, including the mayor, were Lions -- money was a problem. The special tax levied by the Board in early September for erection of the sign had to be utilized instead for property acquisition for a town dump. Most of the approximately one thousand dollars would have to be raised by public subscription. M. E. Parr, a member of the Town Board, a Lion (or "cub", as new members were called), and the proprietor of the Fairfield Battery and Electric Works, took charge of the fund-raising campaign. He donated a \$135 washing machine as the prize in a raffle. Lions sold fifty-cent raffle tickets throughout the community and continued to donate and collect money in other ways. By the end of January, seven hundred dollars had been collected, enough for the Town to proceed. The minutes of February 3, 1925, meeting of the Town Board read:

"Upon motion Trustee Withrow [a Lion], the Board ordered the Chairman to sign a contract with the National Electric Sign Company for the furnishing of an electric sign to be

placed across Texas Street at a cost of \$924.00 FOB Fairfield. Said sign to be purchased on terms, ten percent being paid at the time of the execution of the contract and the remainder in nine months without interest."

The location of the sign was not yet definitely settled, but it was felt that mid-block between Jackson and Webster Streets on Texas Street would be appropriate, "...that being the geographical center of Fairfield."

The final design for the electric sign appeared on the front page of the March 5, 1925 Solano Republican. This second, more graceful solution, was a single arch approximately thirty feet long and five feet high, bearing the same slogan: "Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County." A letter to the Fairfield Town Board, from the National Electric Sign Company of Oakland, builder of the sign, was quoted in the same article:

"Our California Cities are proud of themselves and many of them are employing electric signs across the highway to reach the motoring public with its name and slogan. The electric sign for the City of Fairfield is one of the finest manufactured for this purpose..."

Although the sign was finished by mid-March, it was not installed over Texas Street until late October. The problem was in the poles. The Great Western Power Company, contracted to supply current to the sign, had agreed to supply the poles, yet had failed to cast any that could withstand the stress of testing at load capacity. Eventually heavy iron poles were cast in the east, and shipped to Fairfield, where they were set in concrete in the middle of the 800 block of Texas Street for two weeks before the sign was hung. The Goosen Hardware Company donated a drinking fountain which was installed at the base of one of the poles.

Finally, on October 22, a National Electric Sign Company truck drove into Fairfield from Oakland with the big sign loaded on its flatbed. Employees of the Great Western Power Company hoisted the sign into place between the two poles, secured it with guy wires, and connected the electric cables. The Solano Republican devoted a large portion of the front page of its October 22nd edition to the new sign, and printed the following announcement:

"The Fairfield Lions Club invites the community to join in an unveiling ceremony to take place on Texas Street, Fairfield, tomorrow (Friday) night, commencing at 7:30, when the new street sign will blaze forth the illuminated fact that this is the Town of Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County."



Texas Street, looking west, in the late 1940s. Many of the storefronts have been remodeled; the Fairfield Sign, except for a spiffy new paint job, appears the same. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.



The Fairfield Sign appeared unchanged from earlier photographs in this 1977 view. It looks the same today. Municipal signs and arches, once relatively widespread in California, are now a rarity. Photograph courtesy of the City of Fairfield.

At 8:30 Friday evening, October 23, 1925, Fairfield's new sign "blazed forth." Hundreds were in attendance at the ceremony led by Lion Chairman S. R. Sonneland. The street under the glowing sign was sprinkled with street wax and couples danced "till a late hour" to the music of -- who else? -- Tony Lawrence and the Twin City Orchestra.

In the years following its installation, the Fairfield Sign underwent little change. The Town of Fairfield paid a monthly maintenance fee to the National Electric Sign Company (and its successors: Electric Products Corporation, Federal Sign and Signal Corporation, and Ad Art Signs, Inc.). With the passage of time and succession of sign companies, the ownership of the sign became clouded; the City of Fairfield, unable to document its title, conceded ownership to the Federal Sign and Signal Corporation in 1961.

In early 1961, the Fairfield Planning Commission recommended to the City Council that the sign be removed. The City recently had passed a sign ordinance requiring downtown merchants to replace all overhanging signs on Texas Street with flush ones. The Planning Commission felt that the City would set a good example by removing the overhead sign. Opposition to the Planning Commission's recommendation was immediate and widespread. One citizen wrote the Council: "I do not agree that Texas Street would look better...I ask you to take into consideration the feelings of many people." Another wrote: "I think that anything that has become a landmark, such as that sign, should remain." The editor of The Daily Republican called the sign "the most distinctive landmark" in Fairfield, and added, "Most of us haven't been here thirty five years and can't imagine how the City would look without the 'Fairfield' sign overhanging Texas Street."

The Fairfield City Council rejected the notion of removing the sign at its next meeting, initiating instead a study of the feasibility of remodeling it. However, state highway officials vetoed any remodeling of the sign since it was a nonconforming use (according to then-current regulations), and the disputed ownership further discouraged any major outlay of money by the City Council. They decided to continue maintaining it only, since maintenance was allowed by state regulations for pre-existing signs. The sign was repainted in 1961, presumably in the colors it carries today. As recently as 1974, the Associated Businesses of Downtown Fairfield requested that the sign be "upgraded." However, it appears that there has been no major refurbishing of the Fairfield Sign in over twenty years.

The Fairfield Sign is a double-faced arch of porcelain enamel steel-panel construction, approximately thirty feet long, five feet high, and eight inches wide. The concave bottom edge is a

smooth unbroken arc. The outside edges rise straight up half way the height of the sign, then curving in and up to form the convex top edge of the arch. The words "Fairfield, County Seat of Solano County" appear on both sides of the sign. The letters of the word "Fairfield," which extend across the top of the sign, are approximately 15 inches in height. The letters of the words "County Seat of Solano County" are approximately seven inches high and extend across the bottom of the sign. Each letter is inscribed with single-tube neon for night illumination.

In 1961, the sign was painted blue with white lettering. A thin yellow stripe runs along the border and around the letters of the word "Fairfield." The maintenance of the sign appears to be poor, with paint faded and some panels loosened. The condition of the electrical equipment is not known. As recently as January, 1982, the sign has not been illuminated.

The Fairfield Sign is suspended over Texas Street by cables attached to two iron poles, and secured by guy wires. Electricity enters the sign through insulated cables at each end of the sign.

CONCLUSION

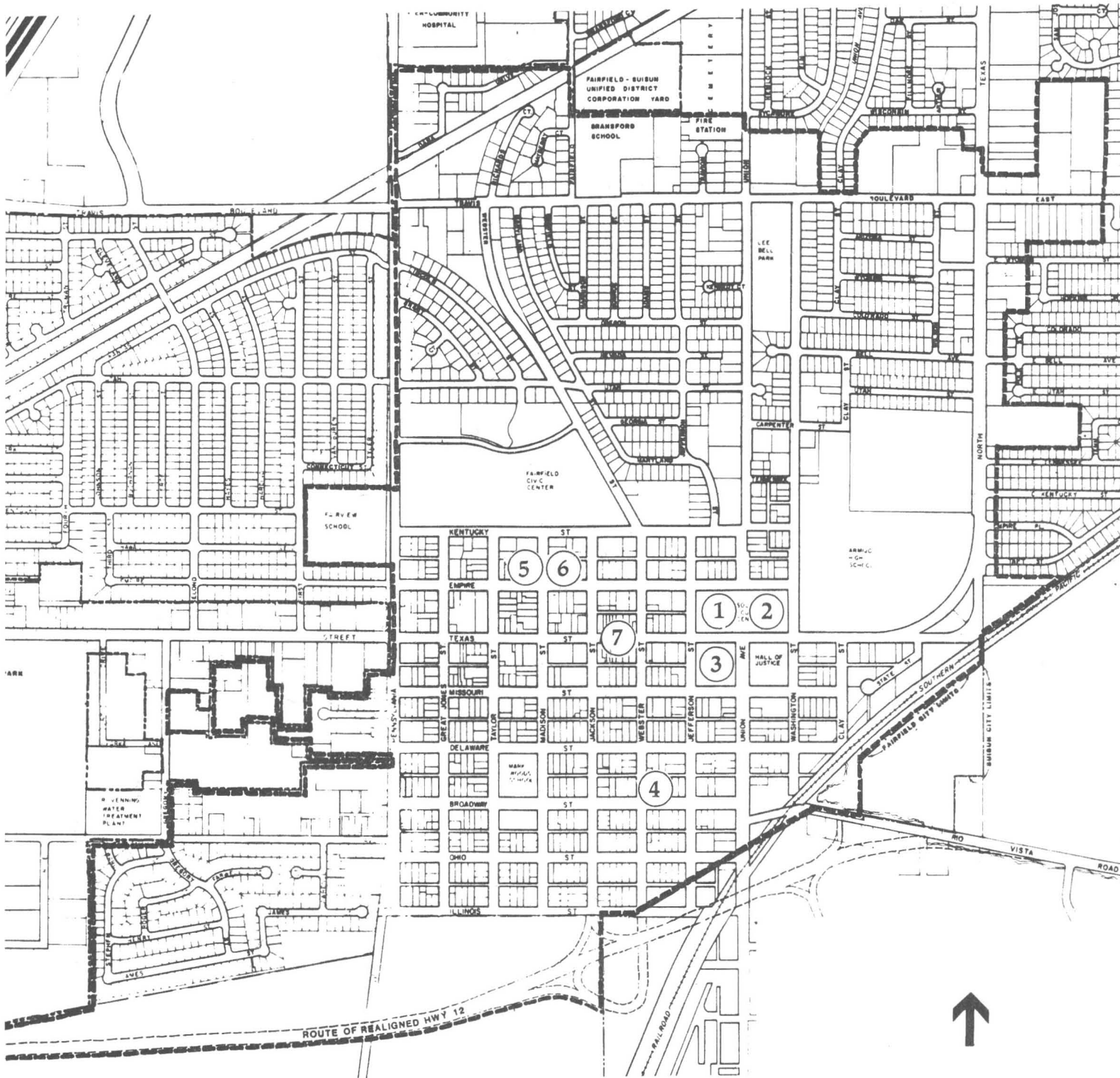
Since 1858, two themes have been paramount in Fairfield's development: its public role as the county seat of Solano County, and its self-oriented focus as a community. As the Solano County seat, Fairfield has been the site of a cluster of County buildings constructed and reconstructed on the four blocks encompassing the intersection of Texas Street and Union Avenue. The Solano County Civic Center today includes the 1908 remodeled Jail, the 1911 Court House, the 1914 remodeled Armijo Union High School, the 1919 Old County Water Tower, the 1930 Armijo Auditorium and the 1931 Solano County Free Library and Office Building. Fairfield's rural California small-town origin is embodied in the classic grid of the original plat, with its tree-lined streets of modest houses on large lots and its "Main Street" town center situated along Texas Street.

If any two men could be said to symbolize the public and private sides of Fairfield, they would be Frank A. Steiger and Henry Goosen. F. A. Steiger, in his half-century involvement as an engineer and surveyor with Solano County, and with most of the towns of the County, was the model of a public servant. The Old County Water Tower of 1919 stands as a monument to his life's achievement as a County official and engineer.

Henry Goosen bought the Fairfield Water Works in 1902 and opened his hardware store on Texas Street in 1904; his commitment to the community coincided with Fairfield's coming of age as a town, in which an identity was established distinct from Fairfield's role as the seat of Solano County government. Goosen ran the utility as a successful Fairfield enterprise, and his store on Texas Street was equally successful. He was involved in the reconstruction of the most historically and architecturally significant church in Fairfield. The mansion Goosen built for himself on the corner of Empire and Madison Streets remains the principal monument of this first flowering of Fairfield's self-identity.

The routing of the new State Highway through central Fairfield in 1915 brought more people, dollars, and self-respect to the town. The idea and installation of the electric sign over Texas Street in 1924 and 1925 represented a high level of cooperation between the government and the business community of Fairfield, with enthusiastic support from the residents. The whole episode was totally independent of the assistance or encouragement of the County government. It was a Fairfield sign in Fairfield's downtown, and the biggest letters on the sign proclaimed "Fairfield." The relative letter sizes on the sign are perfectly symbolic of the time.

In the context of these overall conclusions, certain buildings in Central Fairfield stand out as having major architectural and historical significance.



CULTURAL RESOURCES POSSESSING MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE:

1. The Solano County Court House
2. The Old County Water Tower
3. The Solano County Free Library and Office Building
4. The 748 Broadway Building
5. The Goosen House
6. The Old Methodist Church
7. The Fairfield Sign

Two structures within the Solano County Civic Center embody a high degree of significance: the Solano County Court House and the Old County Water Tower. The Solano County Free Library and Office Building has minor historical significance, moderate architectural value, and major importance as a contributor to the urban design integrity of the Solano County Civic Center. The County Jail, before the remodeling of 1945-46, certainly would have been of architectural interest as a stylistic tour-de-force; now it is a ghost of its former self, the west portal alone (and the Water Tower) hinting at some extraordinary past. Similarly, the old Armijo Union High School was an excellent example of the Neo-classical Revival by an important San Francisco architect. Its 1970 remodeling greatly changed the original building, compromising its significance as a work of architecture. The Armijo Auditorium, a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival considered alone, has been compromised severely by water damage, fire damage and neglect. In addition, its inherent qualities of design always were partially negated by its awkward siting and crude joining to the Old Armijo Union High School. Since the latter's alteration, the auditorium has, by association, diminished in significance. The old Armijo Auditorium, if it is to remain as a contributing component of the historic architectural significance of the Solano County Civic Center, requires immediate rehabilitation. Had the 1908 Jail, the 1914 High School, and the 1930 auditorium retained their architectural integrity (and had not the 1948-49 Solano County Office Building replaced the park west of the Court House), the Solano County Civic Center might have qualified as a National Register Historic District. As it exists today, the integrity of the whole has been too severely compromised by alterations and intrusions. Its component buildings, therefore, must be assessed on an individual basis.

The Solano County Court House, constructed in 1911, on the Court House Square facing Union Avenue, is an excellent example of a Neo-classical Revival civic building. The structure is distinguished by a general elegance and restraint in its design. "The main facade of this building is beautified by a series of Ionic columns," stated the Architect and Engineer in its October, 1917, issue, "which give it a monumental feeling and at the same time is suggestive of a public edifice." The Solano County Court House is also notable for its rich use of materials. Fine Raymond granite of a silvery greyish-white hue clads the exterior, and a lustrous white marble is used in the circulation spaces of the interior. Many interior and exterior light fixtures are original. Substantial portions of the interior, and virtually all of the exterior, are intact, and the building is excellently maintained. The Solano County Court House is a true visual landmark situated prominently at the end of palm-lined Union Avenue, on well-manicured grounds. Due to its excellence of design, scale, careful siting, and integrity,

it is the focus and the anchor of the Solano County Civic Center. The architects were William A. Jones of Vallejo and Edward C. Hemmings of Sacramento, both of regional importance. Jones was, with Charles Perry, Vallejo's leading architect of the period c. 1900-c. 1925, and designed a number of important buildings in that city. E. C. Hemmings was one of Sacramento's leading architects from 1908 to 1924. Hemmings was called "...one of the best known architects in northern and central California..." in a 1924 obituary in the Architect and Engineer. The Solano County Court House was one of his few works outside of Sacramento, and one of his best. Thus, the Solano County Court House has major significance by virtue of its design excellence and integrity as a monumental work of the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture; its design by regionally important architects; its function as the focus and anchor of the historic Solano County Civic Center; its status as the principal visual landmark of the Fairfield-Suisun area; and its central role in the history of Solano County government.

The Old County Water Tower was constructed in 1919 on the Court House Square behind the County Jail, after plans by County Surveyor Frank A. Steiger. The Water Tower is a visually fascinating structure, its Gothic Revival imagery originally intended as a complement to the now-remodeled Gothic Revival Jail of 1908. In addition to being an excellent design on its own terms, the Water Tower is an interesting example of reinforced concrete construction. Solano County had a tradition of reinforced concrete construction extending back to, if not before, the 1906-1908 County Jail at Fairfield. Morris Kind, superintendent of the Pacific Portland Cement Company plant at Cement Hill near Fairfield, had been instrumental in the decision to use reinforced concrete in the construction of the Jail. Frank A. Steiger, connected with Solano County in numerous capacities between 1891 and 1942, was an important innovator of reinforced concrete construction. Along with John B. Leonard, he was among the first engineers in California to exploit the method for highway bridge construction, of which he designed many in Solano County. Steiger also was the designer of the Old Vacaville Town Hall (1907), another architectural curiosity in reinforced concrete. The Old County Water Tower is an important contributor to the historic architectural character of the Solano County Civic Center. Therefore, by virtue of its inherent design excellence, its high degree of architectural integrity, and its reinforced concrete design by one of the innovators of this method of construction in Northern California, the Old County Water Tower possesses major significance.

The Solano County Free Library and Office Building was completed in 1931, on the southwest corner of Texas Street and Union Avenue, after plans of the Sacramento architectural firm of Coffman, Sahlberg, and Stafford. W. E. Coffman also had

been the architect of the Armijo Auditorium, completed in 1930. The Library is a competent and pleasingly picturesque essay in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, largely intact inside and out, well maintained, and set in a beautifully landscaped lot. The building and grounds complete the important and impressive intersection of Texas Street and Union Avenue within the Solano County Civic Center, and are essential contributors to the whole. The Solano County Free Library and Office Building possesses major significance because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style of architecture, has a high degree of design and landscape integrity, and strongly contributes to the visual and historic quality of the Solano County Civic Center.

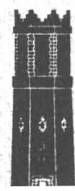
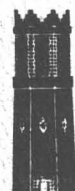
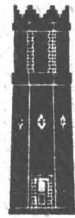
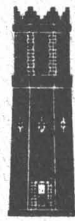
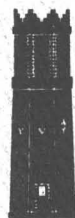
The 748 Broadway Building, in spite of alterations and relocation from its original site on Webster Street near Texas Street to the northeast corner of Webster and Broadway, is of major local significance in terms of its architectural qualities. It is one of only a few structures remaining in Fairfield which reflect the late 19th-century false-front mode of construction. In addition, the decorative detailing of its false-front facade is a fine example of the Italianate style, which makes it virtually unique in Fairfield. The building has been determined to be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places based on findings contained in "Request for Determination of Eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, 748 Broadway Building, Fairfield California" (Project 10 Solano 12, R3.3/R6.2) by Dan Peterson and Associates for the City of Fairfield, August, 1979.

The Goosen House, situated on the northwest corner of Empire and Madison Streets, is perhaps the outstanding example of residential architecture in Fairfield, in size, siting, and architectural excellence. It is distinguished by its beautiful Colonial Revival detailing, including a giant pedimented portico with Ionic columns, giant Ionic corner pilasters and a delicately handled Adamesque doorway. It is sited on a large, well-maintained corner lot across from one of the other important buildings of Fairfield, the Old Methodist Church. The original owner, Henry Goosen, who built the house sometime between 1910 and 1912, was an extremely important member of the Fairfield community in the early 20th century. He ran the Fairfield Water Works, as well as a successful hardware store on Texas Street. Henry Goosen and his mansion symbolize the new identity of Fairfield in the years following incorporation. The Goosen house has been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, in consultation with the California State Office of Historic Preservation, has made this determination in relation to a proposed remodeling of the Goosen House by the Suisun Valley Bank.

The Old Methodist Church on the northeast corner of Empire and Madison Streets (now occupied by the Fairfield Church of God) is a 1917 reconstruction of the 1893 Methodist Church, which itself was a replacement of the 1860-61 church destroyed on that same site by the 1892 earthquake. A church has stood continuously on that site longer than any other church, or series of churches, in Fairfield. It is therefore of major historical value. Architecturally, the building is of moderate importance. It exists as a pleasing but ordinary venture into the Craftsman shingled mode. The remodeled design suffers somewhat as an amalgam of essentially two different architectural visions. However, in the local context, it is a rare and important example of the Craftsman style. Its well landscaped corner lot is a strong urban design element that balances the Goosen House across the street. The Old Methodist Church possesses major significance by virtue of its strong historical links with the early religious and social life of the Fairfield area; its local importance as a work of architecture in the Craftsman style; and its high degree of design integrity.

The Fairfield Sign was installed over the 800 block of Texas Street, mid-block between Jackson and Webster Streets, in 1925, after a campaign by the Lions Club of Fairfield. It is a symbol of the period, particularly of Fairfield's strides forward in the 1920s. Although a number of cities in California installed such signs, usually with the municipality's name followed by a slogan, few remain. There are probably no more than a dozen in the State, including those in Bakersfield, Lodi, Modesto ("Water, Wealth, Contentment, Health"), and Monte Rio. It is one of central Fairfield's principal artifacts of the progressive period that spanned from the opening of the State Highway in 1915 to the Depression. The virtually intact nature of the Fairfield sign makes it even more valuable as a cultural resource. By virtue of its connection with an important phase of Fairfield's development, its integrity, and its status as one of the few remaining overhead municipal signs in California, the Fairfield sign is of major local, regional and statewide significance.

In addition to the above seven resources which clearly possess major significance, a number of other properties within the proposed downtown redevelopment project area possess varying degrees of architectural and historical significance. At the very least, references to these secondary or contributing resources are included in the text of this report; many, in fact, are described at some length. All of these secondary or contributing resources were included by the Central Solano County Cultural Heritage Commission in Our Lasting Heritage.



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